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*of an Office Seeker*



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# Adventures of an Office Seeker

BY

SAM SLICK, JR.

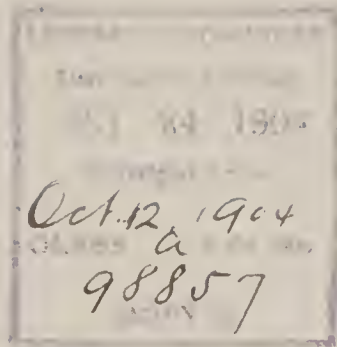
*Sam Slick, Jr.*



RICHMOND, VA. :  
EVERETT WADDEY CO.

1904

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## DEDICATION.

Any one who is fond of the pomp and circumstances of war, of battle's stern, magnificent array, the truth, that "Peace hath its victories no less renowned than war," is not pleasing nor palatable.

And yet no right thinking mind can deny that genius for construction, by which civilization advances step by step, must excel that of destruction, by which it is not only retarded, but in many cases, well nigh destroyed.

Thence it is that a great captain of industry is a benefactor of his race, while, too often, a great captain of armies is its Apollyon. The exceptions to this rule are rare.

Having this thought in mind, it occurred to the author, that no one in the broad limits of our whole Southland was more to be honored for his victories in peace than General Julian S. Carr, of North Carolina. Coming out of the war without a dollar, and in the midst of a bankrupt people, whom he forsook not in misfortune, he went heroically to work, and stands to-day as a leader in the industrial army, which has not only redeemed his section but caused it to blossom as a rose. Nor must it be overlooked that he early realized in his successful financial career, that the true secret of happiness consists in making others happy. And we verily believe that General Carr has done more in this direction than any dozen other worthy men in the entire South. Possessing an intuitive sense of value, he recognizes it wherever it exists, and hence does not limit it to the confines of trade and commerce, but extends it to the wider realms of science, literature and art.

And now in view of all these things, and without a hint or suggestion from him, we dedicate this book to him; realizing that his keen sense of humor will enable him to appreciate the fun of one who tried but failed.





## INTRODUCTION.

Upon the death of the late Samuel Slick, Jr., which sad event occurred the same year in which his idol, William Jennings Bryan, received his second defeat for the Presidency, he left a large number of manuscripts. He also wrote a request addressed to myself, in which he expressed a wish that I would examine these writings, and to publish such of them as I thought proper. Here is his letter:

My Dear Sir:—It is nothing but natural as one approaches dissolution, if he be the father of a family, that he should feel a concern for his children, whom he is compelled to leave behind him. The ties of affection are always more tender when about to be severed. Hence my solicitude that my children should have a proper guardian, one in whom I have the utmost confidence, when I can no longer look after them myself.

From long and intimate acquaintance with yourself, I am persuaded that you are the friend to whom I can entrust my progeny. As I leave behind me no issue according to the flesh, you may have perceived that I have sole reference to the children of my mind, and I need not assure you, as Cervantes says, that they are just as dear to the parental heart as the children of our bodies.

In the manuscripts which I have confided to your care you will find an inventory of their several names, characters and dispositions. Like all other children, where there are many of a family, you may find some of them sprightlier than the rest. These will, perhaps, give you less trouble in disposing of them

to the best advantage, should they ever arrive at publishing maturity. But I much fear a majority of my large literary progeny will lie on your hands for a support, unless, like the Spartan law-giver, you destroy the weak in order to give room to the strong.

But to drop metaphor: In the manuscript I leave you, you will find my life has been an eventful and busy one in more ways than the world knew. Ostensibly engaged in business pursuits, you will perceive that an intensely active literary career has been mine also. That it has not been successful, as the world rates success now-a-days, goes without saying. But considerations of money or fame never dominated my pen in the production of these memoirs. They are the offspring of literary inspiration, pure and simple, without reference to material considerations. But I need not be my own critic. My friends will save me that trouble.

Wishing you success in all your undertakings, a long life and a happy one,

I am yours sincerely,

SAMUEL SLICK, JR.

From the letter just read it can be seen that our deceased friend was no ordinary person. Although this letter must have been written in full view of dissolution, there is not a gloomy line in it. This accords with what I knew of his character. He was too unselfish to inflict pain upon others, and in consequence was ever cheerful in company. He was also of a most confiding disposition towards his intimates, but reserved amongst strangers. But I was always under the impression that his life and conduct were shaped in accordance with some dominant theory. Nor was I mistaken, as the closing chap-

ter of these memoirs will show. These, it may be remarked, cover the whole period of his literary career. In fact they may be said to afford an inner history of a remarkable life, which is now for the first time given to the public.

In full assurance then that these memoirs will be found of intense interest, we will not detain the reader with observations of my own, but give him the privilege of reading them and deciding for himself. I will only add that this manuscript had been accepted by a publisher several years ago, and would have been public property now but for the fact that the publisher made an assignment during its publication. As ex-president, Grover Cleveland occupies a large space in the joys and sorrows of an office-seeker, and as that distinguished American is again prominently before the public as a prospective candidate for the presidency for the fourth time, these memoirs may possess an added interest on that account.

Yours truly,

THE EDITOR.



# Adventures of an Office Seeker.

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## CHAPTER I.

When one's ancestry is all right, it can speak for itself in the bearing and manner of its offspring. Now, the world rightly sets small store by the man who is always bragging about his granddaddy. For this weighty reason, I shall make but a slight allusion to mine.

As you well know, however, my grandfather was a great philanthropist, especially sympathetic with that portion of mankind who were males and unmarried, and yet wanted to be so. To express his sympathies, he wrote a book entitled, "Sam Slick in Search of a Wife," in which he set forth all the dangers of that perilous undertaking. When I became old enough to read his book and understand it, I determined to improve upon it, as I had then an experience in search of something else far more trying, namely the search of office. I realized at once the superior merits of my scheme, for it is a foregone conclusion, if you can get an office, you can get a wife. And then, besides, see what a benefaction my experience must prove to the American people, as nine-tenths of them, black as well as white, female as well as masculine, lay awake at nights, dreaming of the heaven afforded by a public office, from the presidency down to the fourth-class postmasterships in their native villages. This being so, I know my little book will prove a great boon to suffering

office-seeking humanity, from Grover Cleveland, Teddy Roosevelt, and William Jennings Bryan, to Southern pickaninnies, who are now picking blackberries in order to keep soul and body together, until the office-holding millenium, promised by Teddy, comes around.



## CHAPTER II.

As I made two assaults on the City of Political Plums, the first when the Republican party was in full control, and the second when the Democrats had full swing, I will give my office-seeking constituency the benefit of both of my experiences in that city of magnificent distances, especially distant when it comes to laying hold of an office.

But now, before I take you to Washington as an office-seeker, you must allow me to introduce another and better side of it to you, with which I had quite an experience, lasting nearly four years.

When I first struck the city, Virginia was represented at Washington by as sorry a lot of political accidents as ever met under the sun. Among the lot of natives was the "Scalawag," who turned tail soon after the war and became "trooly loil"; then there was the original, generally mean, but yet consistent, "Union man," who could take the ironclad oath, and lastly, there was that loathsome political bird of passage—the infamous carpetbagger. It made Virginians, who chanced to be in Washington at this time, hang their heads with shame to see their proud old State, once represented by such men as Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, and Randolph, now *misrepresented* by one lot of dunderheads who did not know "B from a Bull's foot," by another who could swear before God and man that they had never entertained an iota of sympathy for their own people in their heroic struggle in what they supposed a just cause, and whose deeds of valor won the admiration of every chivalrous soul, even in the North itself, and lastly, by another lot, whose meanness it would

bankrupt any language, ancient or modern, to describe—the carpetbaggers.

But it was otherwise with the North. The men whom she sent were, as a rule, bitter towards the South, but they were able, very able, and they stood for something. Like the *Corps Legislatif* of France, Congress had its Dantons, its Mirabeaus and its Robespierres. But unlike that immortal tribunal, while it cried out “Liberty and Equality,” this drew the line at “Fraternity.” The mission of the Republican party had not ended at that time, and its principles were sufficient to keep it in power without resorting to leagues with trusts and monopolies. Its existence did not depend upon the moneybags of the North, but upon the grand ideas which it pronounced as its creed. The era of plutocratic rule had not then set in, the word “*barrel*,” as a part of the political nomenclature of the country, had not yet been coined. There were no Wood-Pulp Millers, no Union Pacific Stanfords, no Standard Oil Trust Paynes, and what not, in Congress, looking after their own individual interests in the Senate, whilst ostensibly representing great commonwealths. The sad spectacle had not then presented itself of men occupying seats made illustrious by Lincoln, by Seward, and Sumner, who, whatever their talents in other directions, had not sufficient oratorical ability to keep the presiding officer of their body from going to sleep five minutes after they began.

But more of this later on.

For many years, that part of Fourteenth street, Washington, D. C., lying between F. street northwest on the one corner, and Pennsylvania avenue on the other, was known in local parlance as “Newspaper Row.” Beginning in the basement of the Ebbitt House, and extending



south to the old Western Union telegraph office, the great dailies had established their headquarters at the National Capital. Here their representatives did their literary work, held secret counsel with lobbyists, consorted with Representatives, and consulted with Senators. From these issued bits of information, in the shape of a telegram or a news letter to the manufacturers of public sentiment, and the very next day would cause some derelict Congressman to arise in his place in the House or Senate and ask permission for a personal explanation, in which he would deny some charge, or demand a Committee of Inquiry. From the same quarter emanated information, that, like a killing frost, nipped in the bud the blushing honors of newly-made Congressmen or hurled from place and power old stagers who thought themselves invincible.

Of many who were established there, at the time of which I write, were Gibson, of the *New York Sun*; Adams, of the *World*; Smalley, of the *Tribune*; Preston, of the *Herald*; Sawyer, of the *Boston Traveller*; McFarlane, of the *Philadelphia Press*, and D. D. Cone, of the *Philadelphia Ledger*.

When the time for which I had been employed to teach had expired, having provided myself with a letter of introduction from Professor Young, I called on D. D. Cone, of the *Ledger*. I found a man with a face roughened with a stubby blackish beard, and a slight stoop of the shoulders, over which a talma was thrown. He was about fifty years of age. Upon inquiring, he informed me that he was D. D. Cone. Having briefly made known the object of my call, I was asked a few silly questions as to what I could do, how much experience I had, etc. He then made me an offer of nine dollars a week as a starter. I made no reply. He advanced to twelve, with a promise

of more should I prove satisfactory. Not knowing him as well then, as I did afterwards, I closed with this offer. I was then instructed as to my duties. I must report at the office every morning at 10 o'clock, receive any special instructions that might be necessary, and then repair to the Capitol and pick up all I could get as to what had taken place the day before, and which had not gotten into print. But above everything else, I was urged to find out what would take place to-morrow, the day after, or a week hence. As this last command required a knowledge of future events, and as I was neither a prophet nor the son of one, and, as I felt, if there are any two things beyond the foreknowledge of God, they are the decisions of a negro jury, and the fate of a bill in Congress, I began to despair. I soon ascertained, however, that a good guess is as good as anything else in the way of news and felt comforted accordingly.

Having exhausted the House, I was required to go first to the Post Office Department, get the names of all the new post offices, post routes and postmasters, then to the Interior Department, look up new patents and Indian affairs, next to visit the War and Navy Department, in order to get army transfers and naval changes, and finally to bring up at the office at 4 P. M. to write out what I had gathered during the day.

It required only one round to ascertain the standing of my chief. He was the laughing-stock of the keen wits congregated on "Newspaper Row," the astonishment of all those who had sought such posts in vain as this he held, and feared by all his employes on account of his crankiness. I formed, however, a more favorable and charitable opinion of my employer. He was a weak, but not a bad man. He had sense enough to know he had

none, and in this respect he was superior to those who are ignorant of this important department of self-knowledge. To atone for his own weakness, he surrounded himself with a staff of assistants who could hide his intellectual nakedness. What does a man want of originality when he can buy all he needs for twenty-five or thirty dollars a week and dispose of it for a hundred? What does a man care for an orchard of his own when he is able to corner all the apples on the market and sell them at a profit? Preposterous!

First, there was Peck, a shrewd Yankee from Maine, who, when sober (which was seldom), could find out more of the hidden doings of Congressmen than any other man on the "Row." Next was Proctor, a machine newspaper man, who had edited a paper of his own in Maryland, a number one fellow and the Nestor of the office. Then came Trettler, the manifold writer and stenographer, a nephew of the chief's wife, amiable, placid and taciturn. Lastily, myself, of whom more than enough is already known.

Here, at the office, we might be found at 4 P. M., all seated at a square table, covered with green baize, each with an open note-book before him, filled and disfigured with characters, as intelligible to any one else as the inscriptions to be seen upon an Egyptian obelisk, or as an average Congressman's speech on the tariff. The contents of said note-book having been amplified into passable English, were handed to the chief. This functionary would then read them over, pull his beard distractedly for fully five minutes, meantime gazing into vacancy, where, if the poor man saw anything, it was the image of himself, and then put them into his pocket, and walk out without uttering a word, and was seen no more until next morning.

Upon investigation, we found that Cone had done two wonderfully clever things for a dull man. He had married rich, and also won the favor of G. Washington Childs, of "the only great and religious daily," the *Philadelphia Ledger*. In conjunction with these two forces he had secured influence enough to become the Washington representative of this great daily. As a consequence of this discovery of ours, we never hear the word "influence" mentioned now that it does not give us a sensation to which we were strangers, before our introduction into the new world of Washington. "Who is your influence," when asked at the National Capital, may mean a dozen different things. It may mean a justice of the Supreme Court. It may mean a member of Congress. It may mean some head of a department, or it may mean some pretty woman, whose fine Italian hand has never forgotten, but rather improved, its cunning by a residence in Washington during a session of Congress. It may mean all this and more. But there is one thing it never means at the Capital, and that is, your own merit.

Our duties as a journalist, enabled us to take note of many things in the Departments at Washington that were singular, to say the least. One thing especially struck us as peculiar. Among the hundreds, nay thousands, of young ladies employed in the various departments, we never saw an ugly one. This may be owing to the fact that "Beauty draws us with a single hair," whilst ugliness could not move us with a rope. The Departments evidently have an eye to beauty also, while to ugliness they are stone blind. As a result of this discovery, our advice to the young ladies is never to seek a government position unless their personal pulchritude is above, or at least at *par*, for their "influence" is just as certain to tell them "there is no



vacancy," if they are ugly, as he is to tell them "there is one," if they are pretty.

But our chief delight was to sit in the Reporter's Gallery in the House and witness (as I not infrequently did) the verbal combats that often raged below. At that time James G. Blaine was Speaker of the House, and an abler and more impartial man never sat in the chair.

Benjamin F. Butler was a member, and always had on his war paint. Daniel W. Voorhees, "the tall sycamore of the Wabash," was also a member, and so was H. L. Dawes, the two Hoars, Oakes Ames, James Brooks, Luke Poland, William McKinley, Niblack, James A. Garfield, Samuel J. Randall, and a host of others, who have since then risen into National prominence.

Of many notable encounters between the giants of those days, we recall the following:

Lyman Tremaine, of New York, won much reputation in the great Tweed trial, in which case he was one of the advocates for the Commonwealth. In consequence, his admirers in the Republican party, after the conviction of the great chief of Tammany Hall, secured his nomination, as well as election, to Congress. He came to Washington with a great flourish of trumpets, ostensibly, no doubt, to assume the *role* of "leader" of his party on the floor of the House. Like many other men who are great at home, he did not measure up to the expectations of his friends in Congress. Thrilling and convincing a jury is very different from gaining the attention, much less captivating the fancy, or compelling the judgment of those well-trained intellects, acute disputants and merciless critics who constitute our National Congress. Many a brilliant man *at home*, after serving one term in that body, has gone back to his constituents with a much less exalted

opinion of himself than he entertained before he went there. It is highly probable that Tremaine was no exception to this rule. At any rate, shortly after the session began, he made a set speech on the bankruptcy bill, then pending, which, although it did not create as great a sensation as he expected, yet put him near the front of the really able men, who at that time constituted the leaders of the Republican party on the floor of the House. It was noticed that General Butler, who stood high in the intellectual regards of his fellow-members on his side of the chamber, regarded Tremaine jealously out of that weather-eye of his, and it was predicted that he would "down" him whenever an opportunity should arise. He did not have long to wait. A short time after Tremaine had made the speech referred to, Hon. Luke Poland, of Vermont, whose venerable appearance, bland manners, brass buttons, blue broadcloth coat, cut in the style of the last century, which he always buttoned up to his ears, and his general resemblance to "Old Father Grimes," that good old man of nursery rhyme fame, causes him to be remembered more than anything else, arose in his place to plead for an extension of the patent of a certain monopoly. General Butler, whose hobby while in Congress, was to wage relentless war upon all monopolies, determined, as soon as Mr. Poland began, to reply to him when he should have concluded. The old gentleman spoke long and tediously, and when he sat down, before General Butler could catch the Speaker's eye, another member had done so, and spoke on the same side, fully as long. When this second infliction was over, the General obtained recognition, and was proceeding to reply, when Mr. Poland arose and said:

"Will the gentleman allow me five minutes more?"

"No, sir," thundered Mr. Butler; "I will not allow

you one minute." Then turning to Mr. Blaine, he said: "Mr. Speaker, I claim your protection," to which the latter at once replied: "The gentleman from Massachusetts is entitled to the floor."

General Butler, then addressing Mr. Hoar, exclaimed: "Sir, what must be the exigencies of that cause, which for four mortal hours has taxed the patience of this House, and yet when a gentleman on the opposite side arises to speak he is not even treated with the common courtesies of debate."

At this point Mr. Tremaine arose and said in his most grandiloquent, not to say pompous, manner: "Perhaps the gentleman will allow me one minute."

"Yes, sir," thundered Butler; "if you will keep your mouth shut afterwards."

Tremaine's turn now came to reply, which he at once did. He said:

"That depends upon whether you tell the truth."

But alas! General Butler's retort struck home, and to use an expression more forcible than eloquent, made the fur fly! Turning himself around and squarely facing his adversary, he said:

"Sir, if that be your reason for keeping it shut, your tongue will finally cleave to the roof of your mouth. But the truth of the matter is, you have never been able to keep it shut since you convicted Tweed."

When you take into account that of all his achievements, Tremaine was prouder of this last than of anything else, it will be seen that the General's thrust was into the most vital part of his nature, namely, his vanity. It was Tremaine's turn to fly into a passion now, and he did so at once. But he essayed another shot at his antagonist, saying in his most sarcastic tones:

“You sympathize with Tweed, do you?”

“Yes, sir,” replied General Butler, “with such counsel as he had against him.”

At this last thrust there was an explosion of laughter all over the house at Tremaine’s expense. The latter made one more effort to recover his lost *prestige*, as he fairly hissed between his teeth:

“Sir! I always thought there was a bond of sympathy between you and Tweed.”

General Butler, when he chose, could be quite oratorical in his manner, and so, raising his hand as if pronouncing a funeral oration over his fallen adversary, he replied:

“Sir, such a man as William M. Tweed should have hunted by *lions* and not by jackals.”

This ended the contest. Tremaine, humbled and beaten in his first encounter, never rallied from it, for he made no further stir in Congress, and served only one term, we believe.

But this was not the only notable contest of this kind in which General Butler was engaged while in Congress. They were almost of daily occurrence, and if he ever came out “second best” we do not remember it. In a rough and tumble combat of wits he had no superior in the House or out of it. Like John Randolph, he sought the weak spots in an enemy’s armour, and smote him in that tender place with the javelin of ridicule, and that without mercy. His own hide, so to speak, was so tough that nothing but the club of Hercules would have made any impression upon it. Unlike most men of wit, the madder he got the more dangerous he became, as the following incident will show:

For a long time he and Hon. H. L. Dawes, of Mas-



sachusetts, had not been on good terms, going so far, even as not to speak to each other. Dawes despised Butler on account of his disregard of respectability, while Butler, on the other hand, took an especial delight in poking fun at the whole tribe of silk-stocking gentry, who dominated the politics of New England in general, and Massachusetts in particular. In this respect he was worse than the traditional bull in the china shop, and for the time being it seemed as if he would smash all the tea-sets in the political cupboards of the Messrs. Dawes and Hoar.

But a "change came over the spirit of his political dreams." Charles Sumner, the senior Senator from Massachusetts, died. This, of course, created a vacancy. Mr. Dawes had long been watching this particular political plum, and now that an opportunity offered of getting it, his mouth fairly "watered" for it. General Butler, on the other hand, with an eastern devotion, knelt at the shrine of his idolatry—the Governorship of the Old Bay State. Butler was strong in Boston and the smaller towns, and among the common people. Dawes had the ear of the political leaders and was backed by the aristocracy. The General had friends enough in the Legislature to throw the scales in favor of any one for the Senatorship whom he should name. Dawes could render Butler efficient aid in his efforts for capturing the gubernatorial prize. Under such conditions it was no marvel that a reconciliation should be sought and accomplished between Messrs. Dawes and Butler. Anyone acquainted with General Butler will testify that when he wanted anything he knew how to ask for it without "beating around the bush" in the least. Well, as the story goes, approaching his colleague, he opened negotiations as follows:

"Dawes, we have long been at loggerheads, but as I

wish to be Governor of Massachusetts, and you wish to be Senator, and as neither one of us can succeed without the aid of the other, let us bury the hatchet, if not, 'It shall be war to the knife and the knife to the hilt.'” Like the conventional young lady, who has been “anticipating” for some time, and who has already answered to herself in the affirmative, yet, when her lover propounds the all-important query, pretends surprise, and begs for time to deliberate, so did Dawes. He asked until the following morning before giving his decision.

“All right,” replied the Essex statesman, as he sauntered leisurely back to his seat.

The reconciliation took place. And now the novel sight was presented to the entire House of two men, whose prominence made their every movement noticeable, and who had not exchanged a dozen words in as many years, becoming as “thick as forty cats in a wallet” and billing and cooing in the most gushing style. They were at each other’s desks off and on all day, exchanging confidences. Sometimes the bulky form of General Butler would be seen bending over Dawes’ desk, and then vice versa, the latter would be seen in the same attitude at that of the doughty General.

Here, indeed, was a fine opening to have some fun at the expense of the General. All that was needful was some one who was a sufficient master of burlesque to bring it about.

The House, at that time, had just the man to fill the bill. It was the late S. S. Cox, of New York, better known to his friends, who were legion, as “Sunset Cox.” He possessed every qualification for the part he undertook. He was witty in ways that inflicted no wound. He was very popular with both political parties, and could always catch

the Speaker's eye at the proper time, and the ear of the House at any. He had been "bested" by General Butler in a previous tilt, and would be only paying back the General in his own coin, and settling up an old score, instead of a grudge, as they were the best of friends. In fact, one as full of humor as S. S. Cox was, can have no grudges. There was too much joyousness, elasticity and love of fun for its own sake, in his composition to allow any room for the play of the darker passions, that so often disfigure the brightest minds. "Sunshine" would have been a better sobriquet for him than "Sunset." But it must not be inferred from what we have written that Mr. Cox was merely a wit and nothing more. Far from it. He was an exceedingly able man, and one of the best read men in the House. He was a perfect arsenal of facts and precedents relating to legislation, and was, in consequence, one of the most useful men in Congress. He presided with eminent ability whenever temporarily called to the chair by the Speaker, and was honored by a more than complimentary vote for the Speakership itself, on more occasions than one, by his party, and was continuously returned to Congress by his district, until he received and accepted the Turkish mission proffered by President Cleveland.

With this pen picture of Mr. Cox we now return to the relation of the incident proposed. After General Butler and Mr. Dawes had been hobnobbing together about a week, "Sunset" arose to a question of privilege, and began, as nearly as we can recall, as follows:

"Mr. Speaker, it is a fact known of all men, that the two gentlemen from Massachusetts, who have been so long hostile towards each other, are now seen daily conferring together. Has the millénium indeed come, and

are we to witness first on this floor the beginning of that happy era when the lion and the lamb shall lie down together, when men shall beat their swords into plowshares, and fashion their spears into pruning-hooks? If such be not the case, why all this billing and cooing? Why this mutual and frequent exchange of confidences? Are the two gentlemen conspiring against the peace and dignity of this House? Or is there a plot hatching within the fertile precincts of their intellects to subvert the Constitution itself? If none of these things be so, will one or both of the gentlemen explain the reason of this 'thusness'? But, sir, how comports their confidences and conduct with the following communication."

At this point Mr. Cox produced a copy of the *Washington Chronicle*, and read as follows:

"A few days ago General Butler met an old Republican friend of his from New Hampshire, who said to him:

"General, what of Mr. Dawes' speech the other day?"

Mr. Dawes was chairman of the Ways and Means Committee at this time, and in presenting his report, was very severe in his strictures upon the extravagance of the administration. The Democrats printed this speech as a campaign document and scattered it broadcast over the Granite State, and succeeded (if we mistake not) in electing their candidate for Governor.

So, when the question was asked General Butler concerning this speech, although he and Dawes had made friends, he replied:

"Bad, sir, very bad for the Republican party. The truth of the matter is that when an old brindled steer, like Dawes, gets out of the pasture at night no man's corn-field in the country is safe."

The explosion of laughter that followed the conclusion



of this article fairly shook the building itself, and for a moment or two Messrs. Dawes and Butler were two of the "sickest" looking men imaginable. The General soon rallied, however, and roared out:

"What paper do you get that from, sir?"

"Why," replied "Sunset," in his most provoking way, "The paper is all right; it is the court journal and speaks by the card; it is from the *Daily Chronicle*, whose editor confabs in secret with the powers that be, and knows what he is writing about."

There was another outburst of merriment at the General's expense, and it seemed as if that redoubtable champion, from whose belt dangled so many scalps, was about to lose his own. He let out on the newspapers in general and this one in particular, in a molten stream of invective and sarcasm, and wound up by saying that the power of the press consisted alone in its ability to lie and abuse, and that in these latter respects, it was equal to a forty-jackass-mud-power.

When he had concluded this outburst of rage and indignation had "Sunset" desisted, he would clearly have come off conqueror. But as it was, he pushed ahead just one step too much and was knocked out in the third round, as our pugilist brethren would say. He arose and said:

"I know the gentleman from Massachusetts is a *good* man, but he is not *smart* to-day."

To which the General instantly replied:

"As for you, sir, you are neither *good* nor *smart* any day."

This turned the tables on "Sunset," and he sat down amid a roar of laughter at his own expense after all.

Another notable "spat" on the floor occurred between Hon. George F. Hoar, of Massachusetts, and a Mr.

Nesmith, of Oregon. Mr. Hoar, as every one knows, was a highly cultivated and refined gentleman (and but for his intense partisanry would long ago have received the credit of being a statesman instead of the odium of being a mere politician), removed but a few steps by his intellect and experience, above such nondescripts as Tilman and Foraker. He was scrupulously neat both as regarded his person and his choice of words. Nesmith, on the contrary, was one of those breezy sons of the West, who seemed to look upon the effete specimens of New England civilization as the poorest types of mankind going, and poked fun at them with nearly every turn. In every respect he was the antitheses of Mr. Hoar. His sense of humor was so broad that it ran riot over the cherished conventionalities of the East, with all the glee and zest of a school boy throwing snow-balls at the school-house window. In short, he was as full of fun as was Mr. Hoar of gravity and Christian "statesmanship."

About this time Hon. George H. Williams, Attorney-General of the United States under General Grant's administration, was being hauled over the coals in Congress for alleged corruption in office. Among other charges preferred against him was that he was using a carriage, known as a landau or landalet, at the government's expense. He was also charged with having gotten his footman, or carriage driver's name on the pay-rolls of the House, and was using him at government expense also. He was known in Washington as "Landaulet Williams" in consequence of all this. When his case was being considered in Congress, Mr. Hoar defended him as did others, and spoke of his abilities as a lawyer. When they had concluded Nesmith arose. He was from the same State as Williams, who was also from Oregon. When

Nesmith began to speak the members at once crowded around him to hear the fun. After replying to all that had been said in Williams' favor, when he came to reply to what Mr. H. and others had said as to his ability as a lawyer, he exclaimed:

"Mr. Speaker, I have seen many a better lawyer than George H. Williams, in Oregon riding a fifty-dollar mule, an animal, sir, which has no pride of ancestry and no hope of posterity."

There was such an outburst of laughter when he said this that even Speaker Blaine himself could not hold in.

But to record all the passages of wit that occur in Congress would swell these memoirs beyond their original scope and intention. Before leaving the subject, however, we would correct (if possible) a gross injustice. We refer to the persistent effort of certain newspaper men, and Washington correspondents especially, to underrate Congressmen. They seem to have a disposition, which has become chronic, to make our public men the butts of their clumsy ridicule. This they seem to imagine is wit, when the truth of the matter is, it is only license coupled with conceit and ill manners. They change their tune, however, when a member becomes needful to their interests, and it then becomes a question whether their attempts at flattery, or their efforts at raillery are the more disgusting.

We give it as our deliberate opinion, after an almost daily observation of four years, that a more learned or brilliant body of men than our National Congress, taken as a whole, is not to be found on the globe. It is true that a dunce now and then, in an off-year, or by virtue of money, will slip into Congress. But this is the case everywhere, and especially so in the newspaper business, where

we have encountered more fools in one year than we saw in Congress in four. And whereas the weak brother takes a back seat in Congress, he contrives somehow to crowd to the front in journalism, where he utters more nonsense in six months than the average Congressman does in six years. And moreover Congressmen are more considerate of their weaker brethren. They have set aside certain portions of the hall of the House known as "Sleepy Hollow" for their occupancy. As is well known, every new Congress draws for seats, and when one of these weaklings gets a prominent one, he is easily persuaded to exchange it with some able man who has drawn an obscure one, thus by natural selection, as it were, "Birds of a feather flock together," even in the House of Representatives. In the quiet precincts of "Sleepy Hollow" these peaceable political accidents nod, chew tobacco, read the "Weaklies" from their *Deestriets*, dispatch orders to the Agricultural Department for garden seed for their generous constituency, and enjoy themselves generally. They take no part in debate, nor in legislation, except to vote, and they usually select some leading man whose name comes on the roll in advance of theirs, as their guide, philosopher and friend, and follow his lead. An amusing incident, confirmatory of what I have just advanced, occurred one day, while I was in the House. An old gentleman who represented a certain district in the South, and who was a denizen of "Sleepy Hollow," was guided in his way of voting by Hon. James Beck, of Kentucky. But on this occasion, by some means, losing sight of his sign board, he voted with the Republicans. A brother Democrat recognizing the difficulty under which he would be placed, when he returned home, if called upon to explain his conduct, went to him and informed him of what he had just done.



He replied: "No, I'll be d——d if I did either, for I voted as Beck did."

Nothing would convince him of his mistake until the record of the votes was shown him. Then he saw he would be on record as having voted with Ben Butler as against James Beck, the great exponent of the "unterrified Democracy" of the day, unless he arose in his place and obtained the Speaker's consent that his vote be changed. He decided to adopt the latter alternate. But to himself it was a bitter pill. Never did a school boy tremble or blush more than did this representative of a Southern constituency. He was bald-headed and the blood rushed to his noddle until the skin on the top was as red as a turkey-gobbler's snout in the month of May. He spoke so low that Mr. Blaine, who was the most courteous of men, putting his hand to his ear, said in the most deferential manner:

"Will the gentleman please speak a little louder, as the chair cannot quite catch his remarks?"

He then managed, by a tremendous effort, to ejaculate:

"Mr. Speaker, on the vote just taken, I am recorded as having voted 'aye'. I wish to change it to 'nay'."

This was the old gentleman's first speech in Congress. His last was just about as long and equally luminous. There is, however, one bright saying of his which we cannot, in justice to him, let pass unnoticed. He only served one term, although he diligently sought a renomination. After his defeat in the convention, a resolution was offered and adopted that a committee be appointed to wait on him and thank him for his services in Congress.

When the committee arrived at his hotel and delivered their message, the old fellow replied that "it was a h—ll of a way to thank a man by nominating some one else."

There is no disputing the correctness of this conclusion.

At the time of which we speak, however, there were but few really weak men in Congress, and a majority of these few, we are sorry to say, were from the South. The reason is obvious. Men who had brains enough to make a record during the war were still suspected at the North, and so the South had to pick up just such men as had none in the past, and without ability to make any in the future, and send them to Washington. From 1866 to 1872 was the dreariest period in the history of the Southern States. Her great men were under the ban and politically ostracised. Consequently she was represented at Washington by as sorry a lot of men as ever were seen in public life.

### CHAPTER III.

In the year 1872, that part of D. street northwest, lying between Tenth and Ninth streets, and on the north side of the same, was mainly occupied by the weekly newspapers of Washington, every one of which, without a solitary exception, was issued on Sunday. This was done to catch the immense clerical force, which was idle on the Lord's day, the great majority of whom, it may be remarked, showed their respect for the Sabbath by keeping it *wholly* to themselves.

The first paper on the block was the *National Republican*, a daily, and the supposed organ of the administration. Its proprietor was William J. Murtagh, a fine specimen of the Sunday-school politician. He was rather a good looking man than otherwise, had one of those curling moustaches which are supposed to set young women crazy (though they never do), a shallow blue eye, a limping gait and the "cheek" of an army mule. A brainy young man by the name of John P. Foley, was editor in chief. Phil. Julian, a rollicking sort of a fellow with fat cheeks and bulging eyes, was city editor; James McNabb, a "regular," was at the head of the reporters' list. But two of the most historical gentlemen in the building were E. P. Brooks, assistant editor, and Fred Aiken. Brooks was one of those men who take the world as they find it, and finding it exceedingly wicked become so themselves, in order not to be lonesome. He was involved in some cadetship scandal in South Carolina, along with Congressman Bowen, from that State, out of which it is said Brooks got a good share of the "swag." In business, like his great

prototype, Major Bagstock, he was "devilish sly." But socially he was one of the best of fellows. But Fred Aiken was no ordinary man. Over six feet high, with a strong face, strong in its delineation of sensuality and yet luminous with the light of a grand intellect, he was a marked man. In thinking of him we could not but be perplexed to decide which would finally conquer—the intellectual or the sensual nature. It was always a puzzle to me to decide when he was happier, whether when he was tracing, as was his wont, the defects and beauties of a masterpiece in acting or painting, or whether when surrounded by boon companions at the Chesapeake restaurant, on Pennsylvania avenue, he devoted the night to Bacchus. Poor fellow! He sleeps in an unknown grave to-day, he who might have won any honor that journalism could bestow. He was "heels over head" in debt, constantly pursued in consequence by relentless creditors, and this may have accounted for his seeking surcease from his sorrow in the cup that maddens.

The next paper on D. street was the *Herald*, a staid old-maidenish journal, well adapted, no doubt, to the class of Sunday Christians, who drink toddies on the sly during the week, attend church Sunday morning and fall asleep while reading the Sunday paper after dinner.

The next on the list was the *Sunday Gazette*, edited by Colonel Thomas B. Florence, one of the most remarkable men we ever met in that remarkable city. Colonel Florence was born in Philadelphia, and began life as a hatter. Such was his popularity that when quite a young man he was nominated and elected to Congress from the same district then represented by Hon. Samuel J. Randall. When he retired from politics he went into journalism in Washington. Here, as elsewhere, he was an optimist of the opti-



mists. Every one had access to the columns of the *Sunday Gazette*. Did Dr. Mary Walker wish to air herself on "Why Women Should Wear Breeches," the *Gazette* was open to her. Did Mrs. Black wish to expatiate on the "Beauties of Free Love," she was free to do so. In fact, every subject supposed to agitate earth, heaven or hell was admitted except *one*. He never allowed anyone to be defamed in his paper. He had to draw the line somewhere, and he drew it there. But his charity did not end at the office. His home, on Seventh street, south of the avenue, was a veritable hospital for tramp printers, broken-down office-seekers, played-out journalists and others. Nor did he confine his humanity to man. He would never allow a chicken to be killed and eaten, nor a cat and dog destroyed, but when they died a natural death, buried them in his garden. To say he was loved by well-nigh every one is a foregone conclusion. He had but one enemy in the world, and that was Beau Hickman. Before giving the cause of this enmity, it may be well enough to give a pen portrait of this prince of dead-beats. Beau Hickman was from eastern North Carolina. He came to Washington, so it is said, with an ample fortune, every cent of which was lost on horse-racing. This was away back in the thirties, when Clay, Webster, and Calhoun were in Congress, and with whom Beau always pretended to be very intimate. His first move, after losing all his money, was one which gave him the title of "Beau." At that time there lived and did business in Washington a firm of tailors. Beau visited the establishment, had his "measure taken" for a fifty dollar suit of clothes, to be sent to his hotel, Brown's, now the Metropolitan. In due time the suit arrived. Beau donned it at once, said nothing about pay, and sauntered off up the avenue. Day after day

passed, and the tailors became uneasy about their money. At last the head of the firm waited upon Mr. Hickman, presented the bill, and demanded payment. To his utter surprise, Beau informed him that he owed him nothing.

"Owe me nothing!" uttered the astonished creditor. Beau looked him in the face and exclaimed in that peculiar rasping tone of his:

"What do you take me for? a d——d fool? Have I not sent you enough customers by telling my friends where I got these clothes to pay you a dozen times over? And here you come and insult a gentleman by demanding the pitiful sum of fifty dollars, when he has been the making of you."

The tailor was a shrewd man, saw the point, and, it is said, actually made a contract with Hickman to furnish him with three suits of clothes every year, free of charge, except his saying where he got them, and it is further alleged that the tailor made the best investment of his life.

While upon this line, we will notice a few more of his master strokes. On one occasion he wished to attend the races near Saratoga. Getting an old plug hat worth fifty cents perhaps, he procured a piece of red card board, stuck it in the brim and entered the train. He made himself as conspicuous as possible to his fellow-passengers, in advance of the advent of the conductor. As soon as that functionary entered the door and cried out "tickets," Beau stuck his head out of the window and pretended to be absorbed in the contemplation of natural scenery. When the conductor reached him and touched him on the shoulder, he jerked his head in, contriving as he did so, to strike his hat against the window and knock it off.

"There now, sir," he exclaimed, "you have made me lose both my hat and ticket together."

"You had no ticket," said the officer.

“Do you mean to impeach my veracity, sir? I can prove it by any of these gentlemen that I had my ticket in my hat band.”

His fellow travellers had seen the card-board, and mistook it for the ticket, and corroborated him. Then Beau arose to the height of the occasion and informed the conductor that unless he passed him over the road and furnished him with a \$5.00 hat, the value, he alleged, of his own, he would have him cashiered upon the first opportunity. And it was said that the conductor complied with the terms laid down.

Once more: He was in Baltimore on a certain occasion, and as was his wont, he put up at the best hotel in the city. When the dinner hour arrived Beau strolled into the spacious dining room as though his check was worth a million. When the waiter called for his order, he said in a manner that indicated he did not mean to be trifled with, “Bring me the worth of my money.” The waiter glided out as if on roller skates to fulfill the behests of the supposed millionaire. He literally piled Pelion upon Ossa, and set before his guest an array of viands that would have done honor to Lucullus.

“Have you wine?”

“Sartinly, boss.”

“Bring it at once.”

The waiter flew to obey the order. By and by, having gotten away with his sumptuous repast, he pulled out his golden tooth-pick and strode leisurely back to the hotel register and said to that tremendous personage known as the hotel clerk:

“Sir, I wish to settle my bill. Here is the money,” and he flung down a twenty-five cent piece on the counter.

To say he paralyzed the paralyzer, is putting it mild.

It was fully a minute before he could utter a word, and then he exclaimed:

"What do you take me for, and do you know this hotel? Do you mean to insult me by offering the miserable pittance of twenty-five cents for a dinner worth at least a dollar and a half, to say nothing of the bottle of champagne?"

"What are you blowing about?" exclaimed Beau. "I told the waiter to bring me the worth of my money. How in the d——I am I to know what my money is worth at any particular boarding house or hotel?"

"I will call the proprietor," said the clerk.

"Do so," said Beau; "I will be delighted to see him."

Soon he was at hand, and his first exclamation was, "How are you Beau?" And when informed of what had just taken place, he said:

"Beau, if you will go over to Barnum's hotel and play the same thing off on Mr. Barnum I will give you ten dollars."

Beau answered: "I would like the best in the world to do so, Mr. Carroll, but Mr. Barnum paid me ten dollars yesterday to come over and work it on you to-day."

Now, as to the reasons of Beau Hickman's enmity to Colonel Florence. Before the late war, and while Colonel Florence was in Congress, Hickman laid a tariff of so many dollars on every congressional acquaintance he had in Washington, the Colonel among the number. He collected this "revenue," as he called it, every month. The last time he called on Coloney Florence he was engaged in conversation on some important business matter with Hon. Samuel J. Randall. Beau, nothing daunted, came up and demanded his money, informing Colonel Florence that it was past due, and that it must be settled at once.



The Colonel handed him a dollar, saying:

“Here Beau, take this; I am busy now.”

To his surprise and indignation, Hickman threw the money on the floor, and exclaimed:

“Do you think I am a d——d dog?”

We have already said that Colonel Florence was one of the best men we ever knew, but when he was mad he was mad all over. Turning to Beau Hickman, he exclaimed:

“You infamous dead-beat! You pernicious scoundrel! If you ever speak to me again as long as you live, I will cut your ears off.”

Colonel Florence informed me that this episode had occurred eighteen years before, and in that long time Beau Hickman had not only never spoken to him, but if he (Hickman) started to enter a street car and perceived that he was aboard, he invariably retraced his steps and waited for the next one.

The last time the writer ever saw Beau Hickman, he was standing on his accustomed “beat” on the north side of Pennsylvania avenue, at the corner of Seventh street. In spite of all that was degrading in his life, he had a *distingue* air resembling some old broken down French Count or German Baron, and contrived by means of his cigar, his talma, his umbrella and his cane, to keep up appearances to the last. He has been dead several years.

Another notable character which could be often seen at the *Sunday Gazette* office was Dr. Mary Walker.

This diminutive thing (it would be unjust to the fair sex to call her a woman) could be generally seen at the *Gazette* office every evening. It wore a pair of navy-blue pantaloons, baggy about the ankles, a pair of bootlets, a sack coat, encircled by a belt, a collar and necktie, a man’s hat, and it always carried an umbrella. It had a claim

before Congress for services rendered during the war, for ten thousand dollars, but which had been whittled down by successive Congresses to about two thousand five hundred dollars. In order to push this, it might have been seen any hour of the day between 10 A. M. and 4 P. M. busy button-holding Congressmen. It had but one idea and that was so thin that it always seemed on the verge of intellectual starvation. Its head was about the size of a coconut and its face always wore a pinched expression. While other female cranks at the National Capital and elsewhere placed the freedom of woman in the ballot, Doctress Mary put it in the right of woman to wear a man's pants, and thus became the champion for that in reality, which other women aspire to figuratively. It wrote a little book on its pet subject, which it called "The Hit," but whether it ever made one is very doubtful. The last time we ever heard of her she was figuring as a go-between in a love affair on the part of a young lawyer, who bore the odd name of Crypti Palmoni, and a young lady, and such was her erratic conduct that she became the subject of a newspaper article.

The next weekly Sunday paper was one whose editor made a national reputation. It was the *Capital*, owned and edited by Colonel Donn Piatt. And the reason was obvious. He was one of the most brilliant editors Washington ever knew. His wit took the form of irony and burlesque, and not a Sunday came round that he did not make some public official fighting mad. He seemed to take a special delight in poking fun at the late Zach Chandler, and at last the old gentleman was made so angry by Colonel Piatt's ridicule that he armed himself with a good stout stick and went "gunning" for the Colonel. He found him in the Congressional Library, and made an

assault upon him, but the Colonel wrenched the stick from him, and the combatants were separated. Another notable affair in which Colonel Piatt was concerned was with Colonel Fred Grant and his brother-in-law, Collector Casey. At the inauguration ball, given in honor of General Grant's election to the Presidency, the weather was bitterly cold, and Miss Nellie Grant, now Mrs. Sartoris, attended in ball-room costume. Colonel Piatt criticised her in such a way as gave offence to the whole Grant family. The result was that Colonel Grant and the Collector proceeded to the office to chastise him. Colonel Piatt was on the *qui vive*, however, and having gotten wind of their purpose, wired the Central police office of the threatened assault, and when the gentlemen arrived at the Capital office, the policeman was present and arrested them both, took them to headquarters and made them give a heavy bond to keep the peace.

Colonel Piatt still mistrusted them, however, for when I called upon him a few days afterwards I found a boy at the door of his sanctum, who demanded my card. I told him I had none, but to go in and tell the Colonel my name, which he did, and then it was that Colonel Piatt told me that he did not know at what hour some d——n fool might come in seeking satisfaction, and he had determined to get the drop on him as he entered the door. He then pulled open the drawer of his writing desk, and showed me a brace of revolvers right to his hand.

Any one familiar with Colonel Piatt's caustic style of writing would never form a correct idea of his personal appearance. They would be very apt to imagine he was lean and dyspeptic. On the contrary, he was a man of stalwart frame, with high cheek bones and a head and face which strongly reminded one of the portraits of Charles

Dickens. Nor did the resemblance end here. His style was much on the order of Dickens, and, like the latter, he was never partial to anything he undertook to write. Figuratively speaking, he never seemed to think a man's throat was cut until his head came off. Another man, whose righteous soul Colonel Piatt vexed over much, was Rev. John P. Newman, now Bishop Newman, of the Episcopal Methodist Church. Nearly every Sunday morning he would begin an article by saying, "The Reverend John Philpott Newman, of the Memorial—Metropolitan Church—with the chimes attached, preached last Sunday," and would ridicule the whole performance without mercy. As to Congress, he never pretended to call it anything else but "The Fog Bank." By all of which, the *Sunday Capital* became a terror to all thin-skinned people in public life in Washington, and probably caused more laughter than any paper ever known before or since. Everybody read it, and even Mrs. Southworth, whom the Colonel had ridiculed as hair-brained, and who had forbidden the servant to touch the paper, nevertheless, got hold of it clandestinely and read it.

No argument is needed to establish the fact that literary people need money. They eat and sleep, and drink, too, when they have obliging friends, and must have clothing also. Living on inspiration, like subsistence on love, is only one of those poetic fancies which young men with a minimum amount of gray matter and a maximum quantity of adipose tissue in their brain cells indulge in. Jupiter may have satisfied the cravings of the inner man with a diet of nectar and ambrosia, but real flesh and blood poets must have bread and meat. So it was in the present instance, and we will now proceed to show how we undertook to procure "the sinews" not only of war, but of poetry also.



At the time of which we write there was in the House from Georgia, one of the oddest specimens of a Congressman ever seen in Washington. He was an upheaval of the granger "craze," which swept over the South about twenty years ago. This old fellow was foot-loose, fancy-free and independent as the traditional wood-sawyer. It was his wont to stroll down the aisle of the House with one pant leg crammed down in his boot, while his hair, which always appeared innocent of a comb, stood out like the quills upon the fretful porcupine, and was never entirely free from a suspicion of a few wisps of hay clinging to it. Well, he was a greenbacker also, and was just burning, as it were, to deliver a speech in favor of his pet financial theory, as the following will show.

One morning, as I was standing in the lobby of the House, a gentleman with whom I was on intimate terms, approached me and said:

"Do you wish to make some money?"

I informed him that I had not quite mastered the science of living without it, and until I should have solved the conundrum then under consideration, I would be glad to do so.

He then informed me that this old fellow aforesaid wished to make a speech in favor of a greenback currency, for which he had agreed to pay \$75.00, and my friend said he would give me half the amount paid him by the Congressman, if I would prepare it and have it ready by the next morning. I accepted the proposition, and at once went to work, and during nearly the entire night I wrestled with those tremendous problems of finance, which have agitated the government since its foundation. When day came it was finished. At the appointed hour I delivered the speech into the hands of my friend, and



he, in turn, to his Congressional contractor. The old man took it and said he would attend to the matter presently. He expected to deliver it the next day. But, sad to relate, when Mr. Beck, of Kentucky, had finished speaking on the currency question a vote was taken and our greenback orator was shelved without a word. He came out to us with a rueful countenance and begged off his contract. And thus departed the last chance I ever had of being heard on the floor of Congress. It is sad to contemplate the fate of that speech. It is a subject too deep for tears. Had he delivered it, it would have been printed, scattered broadcast over a certain district in the Empire State, and been read by thousands. Or it might have fallen bodily into the hands of the village postmaster, who in turn might have disposed of it to the village merchants for wrapping paper, and thus become a potential factor in the internal commerce of our great republic. There is one consolation left to us, however, the old fellow failed to be renominated, and we shall ever lay the flattering unction to our souls that his failure to deliver that speech was the cause of it.

“The mills of the gods grind slowly,  
But they grind exceedingly fine.”

## CHAPTER IV.

When a stranger first comes in view of New York, the first impression made upon him is that of vastness. It literally seems to cover the whole earth. When he enters it his next idea will be its velocity. Street cars, known as elevated railroads, whizz past him overhead with such celerity as makes him dizzy. The rush and roar of the great metropolis is appalling. When this sensation has been in a measure abated, he is annoyed at its vice, open, unblushing, not awaiting even the curtain of night to hide its indecencies. The almighty dollar is its tutelary divinity, and upon its shrine beautiful women by myriads immolate themselves, and to win its favor, even in broad daylight, expose the sign of the beast with unblushing forehead. Men hurry after it as if the devil himself were after them and ready to lay his hot hissing hand upon them. The Sabbath is derided. Bands of music on every pleasure boat, dancing in full blast, the bar-rooms at Coney Island wide open, more music, hundreds of couples in the broad pavillion whirling and hugging each other in lascivious waltz or suggestive scottish. Fifteen hundred more, men, women and children, all bathing together in the sea on the Sabbath day. Let the curtain fall.

Having been accustomed to the wide and airy streets of Washington, I felt cramped in Gotham. I had read of Broadway from boyhood, and was disappointed, of course, at the sight of it. It may be, for aught I know to the contrary, wider than Pennsylvania avenue. But such is the mass of people who throng it at all hours, day and night,

that one would never think so. And yet this thoroughfare is a world in itself. You may hear upon it the sound of every civilized language, see any type of man or woman to be found not only upon the face of the whole earth, but even such as are described in dime novels. It was Saturday when I arrived in the great city. Next morning at 11 o'clock I was seated in Plymouth Church. Talk about the wonders of nature. Nothing draws like a great man, nothing is rarer than a great man, except a great woman. I went there to hear the great pulpit orator, Henry Ward Beecher. Notwithstanding I got to the church an hour before the services began, so great was the crush I was lucky even to get a seat in the gallery. The pulpit was decked with rare and beautiful flowers in the shape of two mammoth bouquets, which were placed alongside the cushion on which the open Bible lay, and from the center of each of these bouquets arose a magnificent Japonica or Calla lily. A splendid setting for this great orator of nature as well as art. After the rendition of some choice music by the choir, the pulpit Titan made his appearance. We may as well remark here as elsewhere, that the wood-cuts of Mr. Beecher, so often seen in the public prints, are misleading, inasmuch as they give his face a leonine cast, when, in fact, it was infantile. It was a strong one, but not at all fierce. His cheeks were as rosy and tender apparently as a maiden's of sixteen. He had a magnificent head, resembling somewhat that of Benjamin Franklin. Although rotund, his carriage was graceful and easy. After a short prayer, he took his text, and preached on that, which was to him, an inexhaustible theme—The Love of God. He swayed the vast audience at his will, apparently without effort. Like all genuine orators, when he had no more to say, he did not say it, but

sat down. I was delighted to have heard such a man. It is true, that while in Washington, I had listened to some orations that have become historical. I had also heard that most marvelous of the sons of men in this generation, William E. Munsey, whose imperial imagination took the mightiest reason prisoner, and led it without a murmur through the infinite spaces of eternity. But in listening to Mr. Beecher I was listening to a man who, for thirty years, as an orator, stood without a rival. "His infinite variety knew no decay."

That afternoon I spent in Central Park. I saw no evidence of its being the Sabbath day. It scarcely resembled an ordinary week day, looking more like some gala occasion than anything else. What with the gay parties who went speeding past you in grand turn-outs. What with the hotel bar-room in full blast; what with the laughter of children, the shy flirtations of pretty nurses with an eye to the main chance, made up a scene quite bewildering to one, who, despite his experience in Washington, had seen nothing like it before.

On the next day (Monday) I reported for duty at the *World* office, but was informed that the proprietor, William Henry Hurlbert, was not in, but that at 2 P. M. he would be, and was requested to call again at that hour. I did so, and found Mr. Hurlbert in his office. He received me most graciously, and I was not long in ascertaining that my employer was no ordinary man. He was loaded to the gunwales with all sorts of information on all kinds of subjects. He could discourse as elegantly in true Parisienne as a veritable Frenchman himself. He knew all men worth knowing in every part of the habitable globe. The political history of his own country was at his finger's ends, and seemed as familiar to him as his



alphabet. He knew the private, as well as the public, record of every important actor on the political stage, both Democratic and Republican. He was apparently fifty years old and strikingly handsome. He was born in Charleston, S. C., and sympathized with the maligned section. He would have been a great man but for one thing. He knew *too* much. His learning mastered, nay, literally overwhelmed him. He could cite so many different opinions on all subjects that he forgot that he had any himself. His enormous receptive faculty atrophied the analytical, and like the late Charles Sumner, or Lord McCauley (to use one of the Sidney Smith similes), in conversation he literally "slopped over."

Such was the man for whom we had to "report" at the rate of \$35.00 per week. I was assigned to duty under a Mr. Brownell, city editor, a passable young fellow, without sufficient force for me to recall anything about him except that he endorsed all my checks when I received my pay. I was informed that it was not necessary for me to report each morning to him in person, but could consult the register in his office, in which would be found my duties for each day opposite to my name. "The Glorious Fourth" was at hand, and I knew from sad experience what it meant for a newspaper man. It means that whilst others have full swing to enjoy themselves and allow their patriotism to manifest itself in almost any way, and even to allow them to grow hilarious without offence, it meant anything else for a newspaper reporter. He is either on a stretch all day, or else bored to death with incipient oratory during the time and compelled to sit up three-quarters of the night to so arrange and straighten out these joint productions of vanity and "tangle-foot" so that their authors may not appear ridiculous next morning.



Well, it came at midnight the third day of July, and were we to live as long as Methuselah, and never witness another such, we could never forget this. I was sitting on my three-legged stool in the *World* office when the cyclone struck the city. There came such an infernal roar in concert of steamboat whistles, fog-horns, locomotive screams, factory gongs and artillery salvos, as came near knocking me clean off the aforesaid stool. This pandemonium of noises lasted fully fifteen minutes, and was accompanied with the most lavish and brilliant display of fireworks I ever witnessed.

I had been under the impression, until then, that the Southern people were the most demonstrative people on the globe, with the possible exception of Frenchmen. But that night and the following day convinced me that there is some force in the expression, "The Loyal North." When the sun rose next morning it shone upon New York, Brooklyn, Jersey City and Hoboken literally festooned with flags, banners, bannerettes, mottoes and patriotic devices. The enthusiasm of the people knew no bounds. Society after society paraded the streets with brass bands. There was music on the steamboats, music in the parks, music in the hotels, music in the air, music everywhere.

But amid all this riotous joy, this tornado of enthusiasm, there was one who walked the streets of the great city on this great day with feelings of utter desolation and loneliness. It was myself. Of this vast multitude, brimful of enjoyment, I knew not one. I was a stranger in a strange land, and having served three long years in the Confederate army, having been a participant in the glories of "The Lost Cause," heard the earthquake voice of victory of Lee's immortals at White Oak Swamp, at Cold Harbor, at Malvern Hill, I felt that if I were known, and

even joined in the general joy, I would be regarded as a "suspect." And although I knew our own Southern Washington had done more in the "brave days of old" to make the Fourth of July possible, as well as the common property of the whole American people, still, for the life of me, I could not shake off the impression that I was in some foreign land on this particular day. Then, as I thought of my dead comrade-in-arms, whose bones lay bleaching on a hundred battlefields, where they fell in defence of what they thought was a just cause, and how that cause to-day must be mentioned with bated breath, I must own that a feeling akin to resentment stirred my heart, as I saw all this real or simulated joy. This Centennial Fourth I knew was mine more than theirs, for the immortal Declaration had been conceived by a Virginian's brain, and drawn by a Virginian's hand, but a stranger, not knowing these things, and witnessing all I have described, would not imagine, that from the Ireland of America, the South emanated those great principles and great men, which the day was to commemorate. But a truce to my impressions. I had work to do that day and a plenty of it. When I arrived at the office in the morning and consulted the register, I found the following stunning entry: "Brooklyn, Jersey City, Hoboken and Staten Island. Slick." When you recall the fact that I had been in New York only a few days, and that I knew but one person outside of the office, that even the streets, with the exception of Broadway and Fifth avenue, were unknown to me by name, you can form some idea of my sensations on reading this portentous announcement, requiring me to collect all the day's doing in these places. I thought at first of demurring, but as it was the first service which had been required of me, and for aught I knew,

was a test of my capacity, I determined to comply. Proceeding to Brooklyn about 3 o'clock P. M., I encountered a little fellow selling the evening edition of "The Eagle." I bought a copy, and finding it contained an account of what had taken place up to that hour in the "City of Churches," I put it in my pocket and hurried back to Fulton Ferry, and in ten minutes was again in Gotham. Standing on the wharf a few minutes I perceived a steamer which plied between it and Staten Island. I sought the captain at once, and gleaned from him an account of what was being done on Staten Island. I then took a street car and was soon aboard the Jersey City boat, and in a few minutes more was in that superfluous suburb. Here I procured another evening paper, and went on my way rejoicing, to Hoboken. Here I came near meeting my Waterloo! I could find no newsboy and no newspaper. Nearly every man I met was a Dutchman, or a son of one, and in answer to my queries, would either shake his head or utter something that sounded like the noise made by a file in the hands of a lumberman, sharpening a cross-cut saw. But I finally procured a copy of a weekly newspaper, which came out that morning, and which was full of reasonable guesses as to what would take place that day. I knew now the battle was won. I went to my room, on McDougal street, and having rested thoroughly, procured a pair of scissors from my landlady and went to work. I cut the accounts from each paper, spread them out before me, and soon transcribed them into my own language and style. I was now ready to report, but decided not to do so too early, lest those lynx-eyed fellows in the office should have their suspicions aroused, and discover the cause of so much promptitude. Accordingly, at a seasonable hour, I went to the office and



mounted my stool, where I made pretense of being busily engaged in writing up my note book. In a short time thereafter the foreman of the press-room came out and, standing by me a minute in silence, said, "Young man, put on steam." When I told him I had already done so, and handed him my manuscript, he exclaimed, "What! already!" and went his way.

My career in the Metropolis, though brief, afforded one striking incident, which, in view of the prominence of the party of the first part, I will narrate in full.

It will be remembered then that in 1876 the Hon. Samuel J. Tilden, of New York, was nominated by the Democratic party for the Presidency. This, of course, made every movement of the "Sage of Gramercy Park" noticeable, if not important. A monster ratification meeting had been held; the clans were mustering in every ward, and tides of Democratic eloquence and enthusiasm were rolling through the city. In the midst of all this, Mr. Tilden came down from Albany to New York, and went at once to his city residence, Gramercy Park. Secrecy was his aim in coming and going, as he came in the night time unannounced. But alas! Who can escape the eagle eye of a city editor, except his tailor and washerwoman. At the witching hour of midnight I was called into the sanctum of Mr. Hurlbert himself and requested to call upon Mr. Tilden and ascertain whether he would be serenaded on the following evening. Thus instructed, I repaired to the residence of the great man. I pulled the door-bell twice before anyone came to answer the summons. But at last the massive door swung open, and a somewhat youngish looking man, whom I took to be Colonel Pelton, confronted me and wished to know my business. When I told him I came from the *World* and

wished to see Mr. Tilden, he invited me in, and requested me to take a seat on a chair near the door, and he would let me know presently whether my wish could be gratified. During his absence I took note of my surroundings. On the walls of the hall-way were some fine oil-paintings of the fathers of the republic. These worthies of the past seemed to look down upon me and say, "Thank God!! I lived and died before the modern newspaper interviewer was born." A chandelier, in which a lamp was dimly burning, was suspended from the ceiling and cast a weird light over their features. At the end of the hall-way was a door, opening into a room into which the youngish man had vanished. Presently this same door was pushed open, and there came forth as lean, as lank and as cadaverous looking mortal as my eyes ever beheld. On his head he wore a skull-cap, and his feet, which he dragged along the floor, were encased in yellow leather slippers. The hall-way was long, and it was some time before he came in whispering distance, for he could not talk above one. For the life of me, all the conceptions I ever formed of the ghost in Hamlet seemed personified in the figure coming towards me. At last he confronted me and extended a hand which, for all the world, reminded me so strongly, when I grasped it, of Uriah Heep's, as described by Dickens, that it sent a cold shudder through my frame. His first words, which were whispered with a vehemence, that I was not aware before this mode of speech was capable of, were:

"What do you want of me at this time of night?"

Seeing the Governor was not in an amiable mood, I begged him to pardon the intrusion, and informed him that I had come at the request of Mr. Hurlbert, who would be glad to know whether a serenade would be tendered him the following evening.



"No, and I don't want any serenade either. I can't come down here from Albany to attend to a little business, but what I must be hauled up at all hours of the night."

I again begged him not to blame me, as I was acting in obedience to orders, and could not do otherwise, to which he replied: "I wish you all would let me alone." I saw he was softening a little, and presently he asked me if I would do him a favor, and tried to induce me to promise in advance that I would do so. I told him that I could not make the promise in advance of the request, but that if it was in my power I would take pleasure in doing so. He then asked me would I promise him that his name should not appear in the *World* next morning. I informed him that I could not do so, as the paper was not mine. He then asked me to request it as a personal favor from Mr. Hurlbert. I told him I would, and the interview was at an end. I must confess to a want of enterprise on my part. Had I possessed it, the columns of the *World* next morning under the flaming headlines of "Mr. Tilden Interviewed" would have given his opinions on the platform adopted at St. Louis, the foreign and domestic commerce of the country, our relations with Mexico and Central America, our coast and harbor defences, and hundreds of other things." There would not have been a word of truth in it, but what difference would that have made? No one except Mr. Tilden and myself would have known any better, and the poor, assified, gullible public would have gulped it down as the most veracious piece of information possible. But for fear of touching on the favorite field of the Colossal Liar I forebore.

When I returned to the office and informed my chief of the result of my mission, with its accompanying de-

tails, he laughed heartily, and said the Governor's digestion was not good that evening. His name did not appear in the *World* next morning.

From our perch in the *World* office we occasionally saw the head and shoulders of a man engaged in writing in the sanctum of the *Sun*. The man to whom they belong is known from one end of this country to the other. It was neither more nor less than Charles A. Dana, the greatest newspaper writer this country has ever produced. Of every weapon known to newspaper warfare Charles A. Dana was a master. Did he wish to use ridicule, his irony was as biting as Swift's. Did he wish to crush a corporation, he could summon more damaging facts from sources deemed inaccessible than any living man. His moral courage was phenomenal. Solitary and alone, he fought one of the most remarkable battles ever known in this country. We refer to his fight against the "Boss Shepherd Ring," of Washington. We were living in Washington at the time, and were acquainted with the facts in the case, but it would require a volume of itself to narrate them. But there is one incident in Mr. Dana's career that we cannot pass by. We refer to his exposure of what is known as the "Great Credit Mobilier Scandal" of 1871. Some time during the summer of that year it was charged by the *Sun* that certain members of Congress, whose names were given, had been bribed by that corporation, of which company a brief notice is necessary. What is known as the Credit Mobilier originated in France and was first introduced in this country by George Francis Train upon the inception of the street car system in New York. To come to the point then, under the name of Credit Mobilier, a company had been formed to construct the Union Pacific Railway. Of this corporation Hon.

Oakes Ames, a member of Congress from Massachusetts, was secretary and treasurer. He was the alleged briber. This notice in the *Sun* aroused the whole country, and when Congress met in December, a Committee of Investigation was at once appointed by Speaker Blaine, and proceeded to take testimony. Among the first men to be summoned was Hon. Schuyler Colfax, Vice-President of the United States, who was one of the accused parties. He stoutly protested his innocence of the charge, as did all the rest of the accused Congressmen. It may as well be stated that Mr. Ames had already been examined by the committee, and evinced no hesitancy in saying he had made use of the stock, and said he saw nothing wrong in it, that all stock companies were in the habit of placing stock in the hands of those whose influence would be beneficial to them. In short, he said he thought he had put his money where it would "do the most good." Whenever, however, the old gentleman perceived that his weak-kneed fellow-Congressmen, were endeavoring to make a scape-goat of himself by lying out of it, he determined to make a clean breast of it and give the whole thing away, which he accordingly did, by producing a memoranda of moneys alleged to have been paid to Mr. Colfax and others. The Vice-President had long been considered the highest type of a "Christian statesman." For years he had lived, moved and had his being in the odor of sanctity, and when he was accused of this grave offence, and after all the damaging evidence against him had been submitted, a cry of Peck-Sniffian horror went up from the saintly precincts of the modern Mecca. His pastor, Rev. John Philpot Newman, in a speech delivered at Lincoln Hall, a few nights after the exposure, said it was a sin against Christianity to accuse such a man of so grave a charge.



He argued as though it were the mission of Christianity to protect frauds instead of exposing them. Moreover, had some insignificant member of Newman's church been accused of robbing a hen roost instead of the government, in lieu of being defended he would have been fired out of that favorite bower of political saints known as the Metropolitan church, with such celerity as would have made his head swim. It is not for us to say that Mr. Colfax was guilty, for in justice to his memory, we believe that Hon. Daniel W. Voorhees, who was from the same State and of another political party, and who was a member of the House, and knew all the testimony, gave it as his opinion that the Vice-President was not a guilty man.

The matter grew in intensity every day, and finally culminated in bringing the question of expulsion of two men from the House. And we may remark that these two men were perhaps the least deserving of censure. They were Messrs. Ames, of Massachusetts, and Brooks, of New York. Mr. A.'s side of the case has already been given. Now for Mr. Brooks. This gentleman, who was a democrat from New York, had a son-in-law named Neilson, and the latter had written to him concerning this stock, and being satisfied it would be a paying investment, concluded to make a purchase, and instructed his father-in-law to buy \$15,000 worth of it, for which he (Neilson) furnished the money. Mr. B. made no denial of having done this for Mr. Neilson, and was corroborated in his statement by Mr. Ames. But public clamor demanded a victim, and these two men were selected. The day for deciding the question of expulsion was set. Never shall we forget the scene. Long before the morning hour arrived the capitol was surging with a vast crowd of both sexes. The galleries were chock full of human beings.

All the ladies of the diplomatic corps, the wives and daughters of Senators, Representatives and other big government officials were admitted to the floor of the House. It was known that Mr. Voorhees would speak for Mr. Brooks, and General Butler for Mr. Ames. At last the fateful hour came. Mr. Voorhees arose. Any one who has never seen Daniel W. Voorhees, nor read his matchless defence of young Cook, the John Brown conspirator, at Harper's Ferry in 1859, can form but a faint idea of his presence and power. Over six feet high, broad shouldered, with an immense head covered with a profusion of tawny colored hair, combed back from his ample forehead, gave him a leonine aspect indeed, and reminded the writer of that Titan of the French Revolution, Mirabeau, as drawn by the graphic pens of McCauley and Carlyle. He began in measured and slow tones, befitting the solemnity of the occasion. He commenced his speech by an illustration from nature, saying that "as we pass along an accustomed highway, and see some aged monarch of the forest, denuded of its bark and stript of its foliage, lying prone upon the earth, it excites in our breasts an emotion of sorrow, but yet one in keeping with the fitness of things, that all things old must die. But on the other hand when we pass along the same road and see some mighty oak, which but an hour before was towering to the skies, and whose branches waved, as it were, defiance to its foe—the approaching storm, and whose mammoth roots had clasped the granite foundation beneath it, when this is thrown headlong to the earth, the idea of violence is at once excited in our minds, and we say no ordinary storm could have done this." When Mr. Voorhees used the word "violence," he threw upon it an emphasis that thrilled all who heard it. This was the



key-note of his speech. He went on to show that his client hitherto in all the relations of life, had been so blameless, so upright, that the foundation of his character was granite-like, and ridiculed the idea that such a man could be overthrown by such a South Sea Bubble as the Credit Mobilier, and wound up with a matchless appeal to his fellow-Congressmen not to be guilty of such an outrage as expelling such a man as Mr. Brooks from the House of Representatives. Meagre as it is, perhaps what we have written may give a faint idea of Mr. Voorhees's speech.

It was now Gen. Butler's turn to speak.

General Butler, as the world knows, was not a handsome man. His physical appearance was so grotesque that a cartoonist had only to draw it naturally in order to caricature it. One of his eye-lids was paralyzed, and in order to see out of that eye he was compelled to throw his head back, and he had a squint in the other. His body was rotund and bulky, and his walk was a waddle like that of a Muscovy duck. But he had an immense head and a finely chiselled nose. As a public speaker he had every drawback. He had a way as it were of swallowing his words and then jerking them out by main force. In consequence, his enunciation was faulty in the extreme. But the mighty intellect of this remarkable man overcame what would have been impossible in weaker men, and whenever he arose to speak in Congress the members of that body would crowd around him so as not to lose a word.

On this occasion he was the observed of all observers. For years he had been ridiculing "The Christian Statesmen," and now that an opportunity was presented, it was expected that he would flay them alive. Nor did anyone

who supposed so, reckon without his host. His onslaught upon those canting hypocrites was simply terrific. He began his address by saying that this year is a bad one for Christian statesmen, and then went into a discussion of their conduct, in seeking to make a scape-goat of a man who was their equal in intelligence and far their superior in honesty. It would be impossible, however, to follow Gen. Butler all through his speech, but when he came to his conclusion, pointing to Mr. Ames, he exclaimed, "There! Sir, is a man who, whatever his faults may be, has one virtue in keeping with the Father of Our Country—*he will not tell a lie.*" The effect of this last utterance was electrical. Old man Ames was so overcome that he sobbed aloud. He was of a giant frame with stolid features, an immense mouth and a dull eye, and as he sat there and the hot tears were seen trickling down his rugged cheeks, he evoked sentiments of tenderness and pity that even to this day palliate his guilt and soften his memory. The result was that instead of voting for expulsion, the House contented itself with open censure at its bar by Speaker Blaine. This was a sad scene, and as the two men stood in front of the speaker's desk to receive it, all present seemed to realize the solemnity of the occasion, and there were tears in the speaker's voice as he uttered the will of the House. And thus ended the greatest scandal known in the history of the Congress of the United States, and it is a strange coincidence, that the two principal figures in it died within a short time thereafter.

The credit of this great exposure of corruption in high places is due in the main to the ability and moral courage of one man—Charles A. Dana, and it is a noteworthy fact that from that time to this, Congress has been conducted upon a higher plane so far as corruption is concerned.

## CHAPTER V.

Having helped to make the political fortunes of several members of Congress, and tiring of the treadmill of journalism, and especially of the drudgery of school-teaching, I made up my mind to seek an office once more. I accordingly resigned the presidency of an Alabama college, and repaired once more to that political Mecca, Washington city. I had already forwarded to Gen. Joseph Wheeler my petition, numerouslly signed by his supporters and friends. Upon my arrival, I at once presented myself to the General, who received me cordially, but I perceived at once by reading between the lines of his face, something which seemed to say "Poor fellow, he little knows the nature of his undertaking." General Wheeler is one of those physical curiosities, we not often encounter, and which nearly always deceives us. Looking at his frail proportions and sallow countenance one would never suspect him of being as active as a cat, as energetic as a bee, and one of the hardest workers in Congress. But he is though, and the number of bills and resolutions introduced by the little General is ahead of any other member. The General informed me that he would be pleased to have me call on him at his residence next morning at ten o'clock, and we could discuss the matter more fully. I called and he said the best way (the bell rang) was for the applicant to find out some particular one of those rare specimens of humanity only to be encountered on the loftiest summits of Sand Mountain, Alabama—to bring all the influence possible to bear upon position he wanted and then—jingle ling, and in walked

the official in whose gift it was. Finally he said that he would do all in his power for me. Here the interview ended. At its close, the General was turned over to the tender mercies of those already announced and others innumerable to follow. As we passed out of the door, we encountered a half-dozen more bent on the same errand. For the first time in my natural life I felt sorry for members of Congress, and resolved that under no circumstances would I allow my name to go before the convention. And it has not so far.

When I had gotten within the confines of my room at the hotel, and looked the matter squarely in the face, I at once perceived that a crisis was upon me. I saw that the struggle would be a long one, and at once mapped out my plan of campaign. My stock of ready cash was like some business companies' advertisements, to-wit, "Limited." First then, I must retrench. In order to do this, I paid my bill and sought cheaper quarters. There is, or was at least, on Pennsylvania avenue, an ancient structure, called at that time, the Parker House. From an advertising plate on the front door, I learned that meals and lodging could be procured for one dollar per day. I entered and made terms. The room assigned me looked out on Four-and-a-Half street and the Avenue. It was about six by eight feet, being, in fact, only the recess covered by a dormer window, and appeared like a huge chicken-coop on the roof of the house. I chose it for two reasons: First, in case of fire, I could climb out on the top of a porch and so escape the devouring element. And secondly, in case I could not "raise the wind" to liquidate my board bill, I could raise the window and dictate terms from a high standpoint. That these were weighty considerations all reasonable men must admit.



That the average Washington boarding house keeper is suspicious, goes without saying. Experience has taught her some pretty hard lessons in the way of feeding and lodging office-seekers. This interesting class of our population, as a general thing, repair to Washington when all other resources have failed at home, and consequently with not over plethoric pocket books. Office seekers consist mainly of broken down politicians, fellows, who have a "pull" at home, and poor relations of Senators and Congressmen. If there are any fat places to be given out, the latter class are first served. If there be any left, the fellow with the "pull" at home, comes next, while the crumbs which fall from the political table are thrown to the sorry political dog who has had his day. These are the "boys" who get away with the hash houses of Washington, and fill the precincts of officedom with curses both loud and deep, and who vex the righteous souls of Congressmen overmuch, threatening him with chimeras dire at home, when the next election comes around. Although they seize the crumbs, they want the earth. One case in point will suffice. Col. Geo. C. Cabell, who represented so long and so usefully the Fifth Virginia District, had on his list, perhaps, some of the hardest cases of office-seekers to be found in the Old Dominion, (and their name is legion). Among the rest was a certain M. T. Blank, of the county of———— This man, although nothing could be said against his character or standing, was perhaps one of the most unpopular men in the county in which he had been born and raised. To have saved his life, he could not have controlled votes enough to have had himself elected to the office of constable in his neighborhood. And yet, he wrote to Col. Cabell somewhat as follows:

*"Hon. George C. Cabell:*

Sir: My services in your behalf in past time, and my influence in future, warrant me in making application for a position in Washington. I do not want and will not accept a position not commensurate with my merit and dignity. In short, sir, I want a bureau or a place as chief of division, and if you do not procure this for me, you will hear from me on election day.

I have the honor to be,

Very truly yours,

M. T. BLANK."

It is useless to say that when the Colonel got this portentous document, he was wrathful, indeed. But as his sense of the ridiculous regained its ascendancy, he fairly roared with laughter, and long after his first paroxysm was over, and he had lain down, he made the bed shake as he endeavored in vain to repress his merriment.

But all Congressmen unite in saying that for pure and unadulterated "cussedness," commend them to a female office-seeker. She never suffers them to relax their vigilance in her behalf for an hour. No matter what important bill may be before the House, even if it be an appropriation for a creek running right through the Congressman's district, she shows him no quarter and the door-keeper is kept busy running in and out with her card. Woe be to the Congressman who pays no attention to this diminutive bit of paste-board. Col. C. had by some means incurred the wrath of one of these entertaining species of the female creation. It seemed that she had been legislated out of some subordinate position by the running out of an appropriation, and she wanted the Colonel to legislate her into another. He told her it was out of his power to do so, that his allowance of patronage was exhausted. This made her furious, and

she launched a broad-side at the gallant Colonel as follows: "Col. Cabell, do you undertake to tell me that you have been a member of Congress for twelve years, and haven't got influence enough to get a lady a position to put up garden seeds? I don't believe a word of it. I will inform my family sir, and if it be true, they will see to it that some one is sent in your stead to Washington, who has influence sufficient." Is it any wonder that Congressmen lose those sweet and winning qualities that once made them the idols of their constituents. Shakespeare says: "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned." Women never sought office and failed in his day, or the phraseology would have been even stronger.

A few words as to Congressional influence, as there are many erroneous impressions as to what constitutes a Congressman's power. The uninitiated are under the impression that to be a fine debator or orator, convincing his fellow members on the floor, or bringing down the gods of the gallery, makes a member potential in Washington. Far from it. Many a man who never opens his mouth in the House, is far more influential than some who have a great reputation for oratory. A Congressman's influence is relative, and not personal. If he happens to get on the right committee, he is strong; otherwise weak. For instance, to be on the Appropriations Committee of the House, which specifies the amounts to be appropriated for all the departments of the government, is to be powerful, since it holds the purse-strings. Recognizing this important fact, the heads of departments seek to curry its favor in order to obtain liberal amounts. Thus it can be seen that the members of this committee have a strong "pull," and to be urged for a position by a member of this committee is almost tantamount to an appointment. We

say "urged," for a written indorsation without the personal application of a member, is not worth the paper on which it is written. All such written applications are said to be placed "on file." Placed on fire is the more correct rendering of this difficult text. The constant, persistent efforts of one influential member is of more importance to an office-seeker than the written endorsement of an entire delegation, as we shall show before this chapter is finished.

But to return to the narrative. Having laid down our plan of campaign, and prepared for all possible contingencies, so far as we could foresee them, we at once began our advance upon the first line of the enemy's entrenchments. We found most of the out-posts, the messengers of the departments, who were mainly colored, half asleep at their posts, or scribbling some indefinable nonsense on paper pads, placed on wooden tables near the door. In reply to our inquiry, whether the secretary was in or not, the usual answer was, "Yes, but he is engaged now." There were generally two chairs near the door, and into one of these we would deposit our anatomy, and resolve to starve out the enemy, that is to say some other fellow ahead of us. While sitting, reinforcements kept continually arriving, until a whole brigade of battle-scarred veterans, would be on hand, ready to rush in where angels would fear to tread. A whole regiment of women, generally constituted a part of this brigade. At first, being from the South, and naturally deferential to the fair sex, we allowed the ladies to take our turn and go in first. But we soon found out that chivalry in Washington, like hanging in South Carolina, had played out, and that our best policy was to step in when our turn came, as we also noticed that a woman generally gave the secretary the



whole history of her family for three generations past, as a prelude to business. Ushered in, we generally found the great man preoccupied in writing, and not wishing to disturb his highness, we would spend a few minutes, taking in the scenery of the room. Finally, when his capacious intellect formulated a page or two of manuscript, Mr. Secretary would drop the weapon said to be mightier than the sword, and say, "Well, sir; what can I do for you?" Our only reply was to draw upon him that appalling document, our application, signed by an entire delegation of Congressmen, two or three judges of the Supreme Court, half a dozen well-known politicians, and a personal letter from Gen. Wheeler. At first I would watch the serene countenance of the great man, and look every moment for some token of paralysis. He didn't paralyze worth a cent. Glancing calmly at the document in question, he would fold it up, put a glass weight over it and remark in tones bland enough to melt the most obdurate heart. "You are well endorsed, your case shall have my most careful consideration." "I will place your application on file, and whenever a vacancy occurs, I will see what I can do for you." This sounded splendidly at first, and you would go away in a sort of ecstasy, to your humble retreat, expecting like Byon, to wake up some fine morning and find yourself famous, by an appointment. Nothing of the sort. When I remembered the brigade at the door, and that these identical words had been uttered to each individual member thereof, I saw my chances of greatness grow as attenuated as the baseless fabric of a vision. Something had to be done. My financial situation was becoming more shaky every day and had a "run" been made upon my bank, I would have been compelled to close its doors and suspend pay-

ment at once. I resolved to curtail expenses, and bring them down a button-hole lower.

Any traveller, who saunters along Pennsylvania avenue, will see ever and anon such notices as this on the window panes of eating houses, "A cup of coffee, bread and butter for 10c." I had been paying twenty-five cents for the same heretofore in order to enjoy the honor of putting up at a hotel, or what passed for one. I concluded that a meal and a half was worth more to me than a name. My friend William Shakespeare was of the same way of thinking in regard to the odor of a rose, and why not I in regard to the odor of Washington butter; if not, why not? By this retrenchment I carried another line of the enemy's intrenchments and brought the siege one step nearer completion. I was of the opinion that I was practicing the very height (or depth rather) of economy in thus living so cheaply. But I was mistaken. A brother office-seeker informed me that he lived twelve days in Washington on sixty cents.

Upon our inquiry as to the manner in which he did this, (being vitally interested in such important subjects) he said he had several friends in the city, who were in the habit of drinking two or three times a day, and they always invited him. The barkeepers all kept crackers and cheese, and some few gave ham-sandwiches to their customers. Whenever he took a drink with his friends, he generally helped himself as copiously as possible afterwards to the mint man's *menu*, and by raising five cents every day, he procured a place to sleep at night. He informed me, however, that this diet of crackers and cheese had one draw-back. It gave him such a severe case of indigestion that it nearly killed him before he got over it. It gives us pleasure to add that such heroic con-

duct in sustaining this dreadful siege, did not go unrewarded. Our friend now holds a fine position, and no one, who beholds him of an afternoon, dressed in faultless style, and twirling his rattan along the avenue, would ever suspect the trials through which he had passed. *Tempora mutantur atque ab illos mutantur.*

Having perceived that an appointment in the classical service was an impossibility, without having stood a civil service examination, and knowing that about forty thousand men and women had already been "certified" to the different departments, we raised the siege of these, and turned our guns upon the capitol. The door-keeper of the House was Donelson, of Tennessee. He had nearly three hundred places, big and little, at his disposal, but in vain did Gen. Wheeler importune him to give me one. He would *promise* to do so every day, but *perform* never. In this respect, he was one of the most colossal liars I ever had the pleasure of meeting. But he meant no harm by it, and differed but little, save in degree, from the other departmental and capitol prevaricators to be found in all the high places in Washington.

What a pity it is that this government has sunk so low that no one can serve it, it seems, who is not an accomplished falsifier. How long could Donelson or any other man, hold the position of door-keeper of the House, who would flatly tell the very man who gave him his office, that he could do nothing for him. Echo answers "How long?" We have already remarked that it is no wonder that Congressmen fall from grace. Any one who will take the trouble of spending one day at the capitol in the early part of the season, and witness the mob of men and women there assembled, and pulling and hauling at Congressmen, will wonder ever afterwards why the Con-

gressmen desire re-election. That they should come home with a contempt for their species is not at all strange, but that they should want to go back, can only be accounted for in one way. A fashionable woman will wear shoes that nearly throw her into spasms, and lace herself so tightly that she is on the point of fainting every step she takes. And man, that he may be notorious, will suffer himself to be tormented day and night with a horde of office-seekers as hungry as an Egyptian locust, as relentless as the Goths and Vandals, of ancient times, and as sleepless as a guilty conscience itself. He will bear the most envenomed assaults of his political enemies, will work day and night to circumvent his rivals in his own party. And for what? That he may get the pitiful stipend of five thousand dollars a year? by no means. Many of them could make double as much at home, practicing law, or following some other honorable calling. What then? Simply that they may be called Honorable, that they may fill, for a brief space, a large place in the public eye, and then drop out of sight and never be heard of afterwards, until their obituaries are written, and a passing allusion made to the fact that they were once members of Congress. But there was Clay and Webster, Calhoun and Benton—a few great names that posterity will not willingly let die, and who knows but that the average Congressman aspires to the same lofty niche in the temple of national fame.

But, *revenos a nos moutons*, or goat rather. The crowd that seeks a place at the capitol is just as much given to lying, and far more clamorous than that which cringes around the doors of the heads of departments. The departmental crank is somewhat awed by his august surroundings. Not so his brother or sister at the capitol.



Here no put up Utica confines his powers. Here he can sling his Congressman out with a bit of paste-board, at a dozen different doors. He has no need of watching one aperture, like a cat on the lookout at a rat-hole. Let nobodies, who watch for secretaries and appointment clerks and other such, do that. He or she interviews the aggregated wisdom of the nation.

Now, it may be asked, how do these office-seekers treat one another? It might be supposed they would hang together, like a band of brothers, whom a common misfortune had knit together with hooks of steel. Nothing of the kind. With respect to each other, they are the most veritable cut-throats and assassins of character on earth. Confidence in each other is unknown. There are always hundreds after the same place; and to "throw each other down," as the phrase goes, seems to be their sole object. To do this, they lie, they slander, they misrepresent and stick at nothing short of assassination itself. There are, of course exceptions. We are speaking of the professionals; those who cannot or will not make a decent living at home, and who hang around Washington like a brood of vampires, ready at all times to suck the pap that percolates the veins of Uncle Sam. There are men holding office, and men seeking office in Washington, who are as honorable as the day is long, and who would no more think of stabbing in the back, or taking a mean advantage than they would of stealing. But they are rare. A case in point.

A son of Rev. J. J. Lafferty, of Virginia, an accomplished stenographer, sought a position as such in the House of Representatives. A competitive examination between himself and his competitors was held. Some governmental inquiry was being made in which the testi-

mony of a Swede, who spoke broken English, was to be taken down. Any one familiar with shorthand, knows that it is the most exhausting labor, when long continued, of any known to man. The others knew this, and agreed to relieve young Lafferty at the expiration of a reasonable time. Instead of doing so, they intentionally left him to do the whole work, fully expecting he would break down, and be thrown out of the race as a rival. But he hung on like grim death to a gridiron, did his work to the entire satisfaction of the committee, received the appointment and defeated the malice of his enemies.

But to return to the capitol. In the basement of the building, among many other things, is the office of the Architect of the Capitol. This office, at the time, was held by John Clarke, who still held his politics as well as his office under Grover Cleveland. In his gift were many positions, some fat, but the majority lean. Like the rest of the Republican officials whom President Cleveland retained, Clarke gave the "fat" to his political friends, and the "lean" to the Democrats. This was both proper and logical from a Republican standpoint. If a Democratic President, so-called, could retain a Republican in a "fat" office, it was not to be expected that the Republican would treat Democrats any better than their President did. This was the rule in all the departments. Republicans held on to what they had, which were the best places; the Democrats took what they could get. As our main object at the capitol was to storm "Fort Donelson," it was quite necessary to erect redoubts in order to mount our guns. I ascertained the fact that Clarke was very susceptible on the side of an appropriation, and determined to make my assault on the weakest part of his line. I had discovered sometime before that my friend, General Wheeler,

who was on a Military Committee, would have no weight with Clarke. But the General had a friend, Gen. William H. Forney, from the Birmingham District, who had been in Congress sixteen years, and was a member of the Appropriations Committee of the House. I obtained his consent to accompany General Wheeler to Clarke's office in my behalf. He did so. General Forney in five minutes, persuaded Clarke to give me a position. He said he could not give me one on the inside, but would give me one on the outside of the building. Being asked in regard to the salary, he replied: "One dollar and a half per day." General Wheeler asked me if I would take this. I said, "Yes, until I could do better."

And thus was the first line of the enemy carried. My troops (of hopes) were flushed with victory at last. Famine in perspective vanished, and the once regal splendor of a twenty-five cent breakfast again rose before my enraptured vision. No more ten-cent snacks of mouldy bread, rancid butter and diluted coffee for me. Perish the thought!

Before proceeding further, let us take a retrospect. When we first arrived in Washington, we were embarrassed with riches in the shape of wearing apparel, of which the following is an inventory:

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| One overcoat worth.....                      | \$ 20.00    |
| Three suits of clothes.....                  | 40.00       |
| One-half dozen shirts.....                   | 9.00        |
| A dozen linen collars.....                   | 1.80        |
| One trunk, containing valuable manuscripts.. | 10,000.00   |
| <hr/>  |             |
| Total .....                                  | \$10,070.80 |

Like my Lord Wellington, when my commissary department began to trouble me, I disposed of my quartermaster stores as follows: One overcoat, of value aforesaid of twenty dollars, pawned to a Jew on the Avenue, for two dollars and fifty cents. Three pairs of pants, costing fifteen dollars, pawned to a Hebrew on D street, for two dollars and twenty-five cents. Three shirts, payment of laundry bill of sixty cents—total, \$5.35.

Thus like an army on a forced march, we threw aside all superfluous baggage, and being no longer encumbered with *impedimenta*, as Caesar puts it, “we got there Eli,” and surprised the enemy. This want of a wardrobe never troubled us in the least, so far as the public was concerned, though it did cause us a little inconvenience on one occasion. General Wheeler gave a swell reception in March, to which he invited me. When the evening appointed came, it was snowing at a furious rate, and bitterly cold. My retreat in the dormer window, of which I have spoken, was fully a mile from the scene of festivity, and as I could not avail myself of street-car facilities, owing to the fact that my account was already overdrawn at the bank, and I did not wish to embarrass my friend, the cashier, by drawing such a large check as ten cents under such circumstances, I footed it. Arriving upon the scene, the usher at the door politely requested me to walk up stairs and deposit my wraps. Although I hadn’t one to my name, I walked up all the same. Here I found any number of Generals and Colonels and celebrities, brushing and primping, and making ready to descend to the bevy of beauty in the bower below. Having smoothed our locks, adjusted our somewhat stunning collar, and tightly buttoned our Prince Albert (the last sad relic of former splendor) I descended in company with a general of the



Federal Army as my chaperon. Here the scene that greeted me was dazzling. There was Miss W., of Alabama, blazing with diamonds. Here was Miss S., of Washington, resplendent in a five thousand dollar dress, just from the masterful hands of Worth. Here was Gen. W. T. Sherman in full uniform. There stood Senator John W. Daniel, his clear-cut, classical face radiant with satisfaction, and hosts of others equally as distinguished. I was introduced to nearly everybody, but my army friend seemed to have taken a fancy to me, and never deserted me during the entire evening. In an adjoining room our genial host had spread a rich repast, consisting of canvas-back duck, terrapin, oysters on the half-shell, and champagne. Around this board was indeed a feast of reason and a flow of soul. Here my army friend grew eloquent over the reconciliation of the sections lately at enmity, and I was not slow in responding to such friendly sentiments. And thus passed away one of the most delightful evenings I ever spent in the capital of the nation.

When I had gotten back to my dormer, undressed and drawn the drapery of my straw tick around me, I burst into such a fit of uncontrollable laughter, as came near splitting my sides. Reader, I need not tell you why. You will laugh, too, without any explanation.

At the close of the interview with Clarke, in which I received an appointment, I was requested to call around Monday and my position would be assigned. Calling at the hour appointed, Clarke was out. He had, however, left word for me to report to a certain Mr. Williams. I found, to my surprise, this man a Christian and a gentleman. He was a local Methodist preacher, having a family living near Falls Church, in Virginia. He became my friend at once, and said he would make me as comforta-

ble as possible. He then informed me of the nature of my work. I was to be one of four or five hundred to keep the capitol park in order. The work was light but tedious. I was told where to report the following morning, at seven o'clock. I did so. I was ushered into an inclosure on the south side of the park, where I found my friend Williams calling the roll. On taking my bearings, I perceived that I was in the midst of about one hundred as tough specimens of the Caucasian race, and twice as many more of the African as you would find in a day's search in Washington. The inclosure contained a few tumbled down sheds in which were inclosed the tools of the workmen. The workmen were divided off into squads of about one dozen each. Some were to sweep the pavements leading through the park, others were to look after the shrubbery, and others to attend to the grass. As I was very "green" in regard to this method of business, I was perhaps for this reason assigned to it in order that I might add one more to my long line of accomplishments. I cannot recall all my companions in the grass-squad, but there is one whom I can never forget. He was a diminutive, pug-nosed, one-eyed Irishman, who rejoiced in the possession of the name of Peter Patrick Finnigan. Peter was as witty as the day is long, a colossal liar, and one of the best natured fellows in the world. As soon as we were out of the inclosure, Peter gave me to understand that he was "boss" of the squad, and that by acting in obedience to his orders, I might hope for speedy promotion. Before the first day was half spent, I found out that Peter was a fraud. He was only common clay like myself, and all his airs of dictatorship were self-assumed and not conferred. Having settled this fact, Peter became my confidential friend, and at once proceeded to give me an out-

line of his career, which was as follows: In the palmy days of reconstruction, he held an important position in the revenue office at Petersburg, Va. Here he said he wielded Republican conventions and mass-meetings, and moulded public sentiment according to his own sweet will. Interrogated at this point as to his downfall, he replied, "I fought Billy Mahone, and incurred his wrath."

Peter's lies, like those of every other Irishman, were related in such a refreshing fashion that one could enjoy them far more than he could the truth from any one else. It is doubtful if General Mahone was aware of Peter's existence, much less his enmity. But so it was. Day after day, Peter would never tire of talking of how he squelched Mahone in Isle of Wight and Southampton counties, Virginia, and would always wind up by saying, "Egad, and that's why I am here to-day." He and I kept together as much as possible. Neither one of us wanted to work, as we had already discovered that those who work in Washington get the least pay; that influence, not merit, is what helps a fellow along in the modern Sodom. During the course of the day we would perhaps "eradicate" grass and weeds enough to show that we had not been entirely idle. The superintendent of the park was another Irishman by the name of Crogan. Of him, Peter seemed to be at all times in mortal terror. Whenever he appeared in sight, Peter would give a low whistle to warn me of impending danger, and work like a beaver until he was out of sight. Each of us spent fully half of our time away; Peter down-town, and myself at the capitol, bombarding "Donelson." The thing grew monotonous. I determined once more to raise the siege and attack the enemy in another quarter. Peter urged me to stay with him, but I told him "No." In full view of the capitol,



a half a mile northwest therefrom, may be seen a large white brick building, that in fair weather fairly glitters in the sunlight. This is the Government Printing Office. Visitors to Washington are just crazy to do the Smithsonian, the Corcoran Art Gallery and the Capitol, but miss the greatest curiosity to be found at the Capitol. This building and its inmates is a world in itself. Here may be found every species of printing press, from the old-fashioned hand-press of our forefathers, to the vast, complicated, modern machine, costing thirty thousand dollars. In one room may be seen hundreds of women plying folding machines, and sewing together the leaves that fall from the trees of knowledge at the Capitol. In another may be seen hundreds employed in binding, whilst in the Document Room is a perfect army of printers, each one with paper cap peaking over his eyes, and silently plying his trade. In other rooms for the purpose, are stored vast piles of books, whilst on the floors and in unexpected recesses, are carloads of printed speeches, purporting to have thrilled Senates as they fell from the eloquent lips of the Honorable Blanks. But alas! All that the *Congressional Record* says in regard to them is a note to the following effect: That the Honorable Blank, having submitted a resolution, and desiring to speak thereon, obtained "leave" to print. Once in the Government Printing Office they swell like Jonah's Gourd, and are sent out by the members from "Way Back," from the Androscoggin to the Far West, where California's Golden Gate fronts to the falling sun. They are called "wooden speeches" at the Government Printing Office, doubtless because in a majority of cases they emanate from wooden heads, known in common parlance as block-heads.

Such is the Government Printing Office. Ever since the civil service humbug went into effect this office has



become the resource of place-hunting Congressmen, as the civil service does not apply to it. Go there when you will, from 9 A. M. to 5 P. M., and you will find the ante-room filled with a delegation, waiting until another comes out. They pour in and out in this way the live-long day, and if the Public Printer has any other business except receiving Congressmen it must come after office hours, for it is manifest that he has no time to do so during the day.

S. P. Rounds, of Illinois, a great friend of Hon. John A. Logan, was Public Printer at this time. His position was somewhat anomalous. Appointed by a Republican President, he was retained in office by a Democratic one. This office was chock full of Republicans, holding the best places, and who had been appointed at the instance of Republican Senators and members. But presto, change. Now the pressure is from Democratic Senators and members. To dismiss the Republican appointees would bring down on Mr. R.'s head the wrath and vengeance of his political associates. To deny the Democrats would imperil his own chances of being retained. Mr. R. resolved upon a bold stroke. He called for a larger appropriation, which he got, and literally glutted the office with more appointments. Each room was so full of men and women that they could hardly move about.

Such was the posture of affairs when we turned our longing eyes upon this department. Notwithstanding it was so crowded, I was persuaded there was room for one more, and I determined, if possible, to be that one.

Having come to this conclusion, one fine morning in May, I hung my rake upon a rose-bush in the Capitol Park (where, for aught we know, it may be hanging yet), and repaired to the residence of General Wheeler. I acquainted him with the fact that while the music of birds, the splash of fountains, the odor of flowers, and the view

of neatly trimmed shrubbery was pleasing to the senses, yet, having been raised upon a farm, I had gotten a surfeit of these things, as well as the scent of new-mown hay, and in consequence intended resigning my position at the Capitol and striking for higher wages. The General, who is one of the best men imaginable, said he did not blame me, and that he would do all he could for me at the printing office. That very morning we made a descent upon Mr. Rounds. Our first assault upon the picket line was unsuccessful, as the saddle-tinted, freckled face custodian of the door leading into the lion's den, informed us that his majesty "was engaged." As it was near the "morning hour," as they say at the House, I suffered General Wheeler to depart, with the promise of another assault next morning.

Promptly at the hour named, the assault was made, and we entered the first line of the enemy's intrenchments. We found Mr. Rounds to be a thick-set, heavy, dark-skinned man, decidedly tending to *embonpoint*. He had a good-natured face, notwithstanding that Peter Finnigan had represented him to be "as ugly as the 'divil' himself." The interview was pleasant, but amounted to nothing. He simply told the General that he would make some changes soon, and when he did he would consider his friend's case. That was all. And so it went on for nearly a month. General Wheeler would call; a note would be sent out to him from Mr. Rounds, the note would be handed to me, I would read it, and that ended the farce for that day. But perseverance conquers all things except an office-seeker's thirst for place and a politician's desire for reelection. I was at length assigned to a position as laborer in the Specifications Room. But oh, horrors! Who can picture, or measure rather, the vast expanse that intervenes between expectation and realization. When I re-

ceived my appointment I was in ecstacies. I was taken in out of the wet, and with the enormous *per diem* of two dollars a day even a twenty-cent breakfast seemed contemptible, and my little dormitory shrunk to the dimensions of a rat-hole. With joy I hied me to the office, scarcely deigning to bestow a passing glance at that old, weather-beaten bust of Benjamin Franklin that adorned the eastern door of the office. Franklin! fiddle-sticks! he never earned two dollars a day in his life in a printing office.

I was told to report to Mr. W. A. Miller, foreman of the Specifications Room, who would show me what I had to do. Ascending three flights of steps, I found myself in his presence. Heavens, what an object! His face had the most villainous and sinister aspect I had ever seen. It was coarse and brutal, dark and lowering. His hair was slightly gray, his beard of the same color, and stubby. His lips were sensual and devilish to the most satanic degree. His manners were in keeping with his countenance. And yet, strange to relate, there were green spots in the arid waste of the man's nature, like an oasis in the desert; however, few and far between. If he had a friend in the office no one knew it but himself, for he was so universally despised and hated that anyone owning to a fondness for Miller laid himself open to suspicion at once. No malice rankles in our breasts towards him as we relate this. We pity him from the bottom of our hearts. He did not possess meanness, it possessed him, body and soul, or in the language of Holy Writ, he was led captive by the devil at his will, and to be acquainted with Miller gave one the poorest possible opinion of "Old Nick."

The task assigned us was this: The Specifications Room (leaving out the proof room) is devoted exclusively to mechanical work. "Forms" have to be conveyed from



the stones to the press, there verified and placed in the rack. Those known as "solids" weighed anywhere from 180 to 200 pounds. One-half of this incessant and heavy lifting fell to my share. The other half fell to the share of Fred Loftus, a young jackanapes and rattle-brained nonentity, whom Congressman Finnerty had discovered in Chicago, or some other delectable village out West, and transplanted to the virgin soil of the district, where, it is needless to say, he flourished like a green bay tree. The other was William Kelly, a ponderous son of Erin, red-faced, blue-eyed, dull and clumsy. Nothing in the world delighted Kelly more than talking of "Misther" Gladstone and "Ould Ireland." He was also a most devoted Catholic, and nothing made him so furious as to call into question the right of Home Rule, or Catholicism, which Loftus, out of pure "cussedness," often did. The result of this was a perpetual warfare of words between them, which at times came near resulting in blows. Both of these men were old stagers and had "learned the ropes," and in consequence threw upon me more than my share of the work. But I was not long in learning how the land lay, and put a stop to it. There was still another laborer in the gang, but as he was a negro, he was Miller's pet, and in consequence assigned to a soft "snap"—that of carrying copy from the printing office to the patent office and vice versa. Such were my environments. I had not been in the office twenty-four hours before I had knocked the skin from my knuckles, bruised my shanks, and become thoroughly disgusted. I resolved to "kick" and "kick" hard. I was strengthened in this resolution by a suspicion which had entered my mind, namely, that to be content with such a job implied lack of ambition as well as capacity. And secondly, no self-respecting white man with my educational and social advantages could stand such company as



I was thrown into. Thirdly, if my friends could do nothing better for me I would resign and go home. Fourthly, I was possessed with the idea, somehow, that this particular job was set aside by the Public Printer as a sort of insane asylum, where persons could be speedily cured of the lunacy of office-seeking. And that it has this effect, whether so intended or not, there can be no question. I was informed that numbers of patients, laboring under all sorts of official hallucinations, who had been consigned to Dr. Miller's care, had left Washington, not only cured, but rejoicing, and that not one was ever known to return. In fact, one young fellow from Hon. John S. Barbour's district was cured in a single day, and did not even call round on pay-day. This was the most complete cure ever recorded by the office, for of all the thousands who have served there, he was the only one who has never called for his pay. He was doubtless afraid they would endeavor to induce him to stay by the offer of higher wages.

We have just said we intended to "kick." But we intended to kick where it would do the most good. We dropped a note to the Public Printer, informing him of the fact that the work assigned us was too severe, and that he would please transfer us to another room where the labor was not so heavy. To this he replied that it was only by urgent solicitation that he gave us the job we had, and if we were not content there were hundreds who would be glad enough to get it, etc. Mr. Rounds was declared entitled to a knock-down in the first round. I resolved upon another mode of attack. I knew General Wheeler had done all he could, and I would bring in another horse, known on the political turf of Virginia as the Royal George, who had never "broken," flown the track, or lost a race since he came before the public, twenty years ago. I refer to Hon. George C. Cabell, of Danville, Virginia,

than whom a better representative never went to Congress. The Colonel had been in Congress for more than a decade, was a prominent member of the Committee on Appropriations, and was a man of positive force in Washington. Accordingly, we laid our case before him, and told him, perhaps, what he already knew, that although appointed from Alabama and credited to General Wheeler, owing to a temporary residence in his district, yet I was a bona fide citizen of the Fifth District of Virginia, and as such, his constituent. He said he would see Rounds and see what he could do for me, that he knew the place I held did not suit me. This point gained, I resolved to "tough it out" with Miller until this new move resulted in success or failure. I knew from sad experience that light artillery had no more effect on the Public Printer than boiled peas on the hide of a rhinoceros. My bird-shot did not even stick. But when my heavy columbiad, in the shape of a call from Colonel Cabell, poured in a broadside upon him, he moved at once. He sent upstairs for me to come down. I went. The interview was short, but to the point. I would be appointed in a few days to a better position, namely, to the proof room.

Mr. R. left in a few days for Fortress Monroe, but left word that he would attend to my case on his return. He did so. The following is a copy of my appointment:

OFFICE OF PUBLIC PRINTER,  
WASHINGTON, D. C., July 7, 1886.

*Samuel Slick, Jr.:*

Sir,—You are hereby transferred to a position as a copy-holder in the specifications room of this office and may report to W. A. Miller, foreman in charge, Monday, July 19, 1886.

Very respectfully,

S. P. ROUNDS,  
*Public Printer.*

## CHAPTER VI.

### *In Which Fallen Greatness is Considered, With Some Observations Thereon.*

As some traveller, ascending to the mountain's summit, stops ever and anon to rest himself and gaze on scenes below, and as he perceives from his elevated and changed point of view, objects of interest amid the scenes in which he lately mingled, so did I now revisit the sphere in which by force of circumstances I lately lived and moved and had my being.

Reader, perhaps in the course of your natural life you may have heard the word "cheek" used in a figurative sense. But you will never know the full force of that word until you have gone to the Capital of these United States. In going back over my own career for the past four months I am astonished at my own advancement in that difficult science, for whereas I was as backward as a boy was fifty years ago, I now had as much of it as the average youth of to-day, which is saying much.

And now as I am soon to recede from my late companions in exile from office and official pap, let us take a calm survey of a crowd which, at the time of which we write, was wont to assemble every evening in the lobby of the Metropolitan Hotel. Here could be seen at a glance broken down orators, whose fame once filled the land; effete politicians, whose power was once known and honored in the councils of their party, at the crack of whose whip the political teams went spinning, at whose nod candidates were nominated, and at whose frown they fell.

Mingling in the crowd might be seen former ministers of the gospel, once illustrious for pulpit eloquence and everyday piety. College presidents, eminent for learning, become the veriest dead-beats on earth, bar-room bummers and free lunch fiends.

A pen picture of a few of the most illustrious may not come amiss. Some may recover their lost estate, hence we will omit real names and give only initials, or such titles as their peculiarities suggested. First then there could be seen Colonel ———, who, from a certain resemblance to the fowl in question, we will call "Crow." "Crow" was at one time a prominent figure in Republican circles in the Old Dominion, but having gotten into some trouble therein, he shook the dust of his native heath from his feet and came to Washington. Here, by dint of an extensive acquaintance with public men, coupled with great natural abilities, he contrived to drink the best whiskey to be had at "Drivers" or the Metropolitan; to clothe himself well, and especially to wear the whitest and most stunning collars of the stand-up style to be seen on the Avenue of this city of magnificent dudes as well as distances. He was lame of one leg, which caused him to wobble a little as he walked. He was always clad in spotless black. His lameness gave him the gait, and his clothes the color, of the crow. Hence his soubriquet. He was a man of fine conversational powers, sarcastic generally, which lent a decidedly sharp flavor to his verbal dishes. He had no confidence in any one, and everybody returned the compliment with compound interest. Although an incessant drinker, he was seldom drunk, which proved his staying powers were great. Many a time, as I passed along the Avenue in front of "Drivers" I could hear his metallic yet merry laugh, as he poked fun at some just



absent politician, whom but a moment before he had pledged in a glass of Veuve-Clicquot at the politician's expense. He usually carried a bundle of magazines, or newspapers under his arm, which gave him a literary aspect. He could nearly always be seen of an evening at the Metropolitan and nearly always had a Senator or Member in tow. Such was "Crow," the most complete demonstration of the possibilities of "cheek" since the days of "Beau Hickman."

Here comes Colonel S., clearing his throat as he strolls leisurely into the reading room, and lays hold of a pen. What an eventful history his has been within the recent years. A few short years ago and he was a Democratic leader in Southside Virginia, next a prominent Republican—prominent enough to be nominated by his party for Congress—now socially ostracised, a resident of Washington, broken in fortune and resources. Brought into close contact with those whom he once spurned, he never forgot his dignity and would fight at the dropping of a hat. Accused of all sorts of questionable transactions behind his back, no one had the hardihood to insult him to his face. Surrounded with the most implacable enemies, he pursued the even tenor of his way as unconcerned as if he had not a foe in the world. Such is Colonel S.

What tall commanding person is that with a gray mustache and long iron-gray hair falling upon his ample shoulders? The one I mean standing at the bar there and singing snatches of a gay song to his comrades? Ah, that is Colonel C., of Louisiana lately, of Virginia formerly. His history would read like a romance, nay, surpass fiction itself. Sent to college at an early age, he there stood head and shoulders above all his classmates in all of the purely intellectual studies, whilst as a debater

none could overtop him. Entering the Methodist ministry, he soon became one of the most eminent orators in a denomination which has furnished the modern world with three of its greatest, Whitfield, Bascom, and Munsey. Great as were his intellectual gifts, he was deeply pious also, and his name a synonym for all that was good. Admiring parents named their children for him, assemblies coveted his presence, where, like Saul among his brethren, he towered above them all. The war came. He threw the whole energy of his nature into the Southern cause. The South failed, as the world knows, and Colonel C. failed with it. He became dissipated, went into politics in Louisiana as a Republican, and was elected Speaker of a Republican Legislature. Was involved in the fierce factional fights of Warmoth, Pinchback, and Casey; became a duelist and "winged" his man; left Louisiana and took up his residence in Washington, and drifted into that vast army of failures, whom it would seem some inexorable law compels to gravitate towards this political Mecca. But alas! Like others, he found there was no balm for political failures in the modern Gilead, and then, like one who has staked his all and lost, he seems to have no other aim in life than to obtain "surcease from sorrow." Hence the maddening bowl, the gay song from lips whose utterance once thrilled the vast assembly or held it riveted within the grasp of his merciless logic.

Although a constant caller, he never remains long at the Metropolitan, or any other place. He has an unquiet air about him, as if the Holy Ghost with its spirit fingers, felt but unseen, still rattles the skeletons of memory in his heart. Many are praying in Virginia for this man. May he yet arise from the low surroundings in which his great heart has beaten wearily for so many years, for despite

all his assumed hilarity, one can see, who is accustomed to the study of human faces, that he is not in harmony with his besotted environments. There is a far away look in his eye which bespeaks the inquietude of a soaring spirit.

There comes another remarkable looking man who, in spite of his too prominent nose, bears a striking resemblance to a certain Virginia Congressman. Ah! That is the "Judge." Well, what about him? He, too, hails from the Old Dominion, where he won his title, and was a candidate for Congress so long that he came near getting the nomination by sheer force of seniority as a candidate. Is he a great man? A very natural question for one who knows him not. Like the ambitious female, who possessed all the contortions of the Sybil without its inspiration, the "Judge" assumes what he conceives to be the air of greatness to hide his want of it. He is the dude of the crowd, dressing in faultless style, and by virtue of an office which pays him nearly two thousand a year, looks down with haughty contempt from his eyrie upon "Crow" and others, whom he only recognizes in a sort of patronizing way. Poor fellow! Did he know the opinion entertained of himself by those around him, he would dismiss that supercilious air of his and realize that he was merely "a dude, mashed on himself and having no rivals," as John Hannon would say.

Again. Who is that standing there just outside of the storm door, dressed in a brand new suit of store clothes of a Jewish sort, with an oiled mustache, a great shock of black curls poking out from under the brim of his new plug hat, with an immense knotted cane in his hand, and looking for all the world like the "Jack of Spades" or a reformed gambler. He, too, is a dude, and his friends call him by that endearing appellation. "Dude" is a

living, moving, breathing monument to the office-getting powers of the Hon. George D. Wise, from whose district he hails. When "Dude" struck the capital the gallant Wise, like Noah's dove, had no rest for the soles of his feet. He ransacked every department and every bureau in the great city for "Dude." He took him to the great emporium of garden seeds. No go. He rambled through the spacious corridors of the Interior, the Navy, the War and Treasury Departments. Still the same result. As a forlorn hope, he tried the Coast and Geodetic Survey offices. Here he struck oil for "Dude," for he procured him a position which paid him one dollar and a half per day. "Dude" took it, attended to his business, was promoted to a better place, and now comes regularly to the natural habitat, the Metropolitan, to display his clothes, smoke his cigars, and bully-rag the grand old party. But he was a good fellow. If ever a man worshipped his benefactor "Dude" worshipped him. He was a *Wise* man, and no mistake. Unlike the base ingrate who worries his Congressman to death before he gets an office, and damns him with faint praise afterwards, he never tired; and were we to base our estimate of Captain Wise's character from "Dude's" statements we would pronounce him an angel. "Dude" was a "regular." He could be seen every evening, sooner or later, at headquarters, with his five-cent cigar, his stick and his pomatum.

One more illustrious example. There came in a gentleman just now, about forty-eight years old, with light hair, blue eyes, a florid face and a fat nose, wearing a grey suit that has seen considerable service, who walked rapidly up the long corridor as far as the hotel register, which he inspected keenly, and then turned upon his heel and walked as rapidly away. There was a painful expression upon



his face, with a spice of contempt lurking in the corners of his mouth, as though he felt the world owed him something and refused to pay it. He, too, is a man with a history behind him. Here is a part of it: At one time a prominent Southern business man, he became ambitious and went into journalism with a grand flourish of trumpets, advocating the "Third party, which was to knock both the others into a cocked hat." Result: "Busted all to smash, fifteen thousand dollars in debt, and soured against the whole human race; and yet, strange to say, generous as ever, cursing his fate, but struggling against it, staving off mortgages on his press, type and fixtures, at war with his foreman for wages past due, patching up truces with that indomitable functionary, who has but one eye, and that one always to business, he still contrives semi-occasionally to get out an issue, of which it might be said, 'tis distance lends enchantment to the "view." A brave soul—a sort of half and half between a Don Pasquale and a Wilkins Micawber, seasoned with a slight relish of a Mulberry Sellars, with this exception, that whereas the other Micawber was always expecting something to turn up, this one is in constant dread lest something turn down.

He is tolerant to a startling degree, for in his office may be found the pale-faced student, poring over his maiden efforts on Political Economy, the daring free thinker, the voluble Knight of Labor, the Greenback theorizer, the Woman's Rights advocate, all of whom can get a send off in his paper merely for the asking. Swindled by pretended friends, pursued by relentless creditors, he yet manages to maintain his position as a national character. Without a dollar of his own, he yet points the way to national wealth. Such is Colonel L. C., whose history

and characteristics would furnish the ground work of a novel more exciting than St. Elmo or "The Old Curiosity Shop." But a truce to fallen greatness. We have only glanced at a few of that indescribable throng, who made evening hideous at the Metropolitan, who vexed the righteous soul of the night clerk overmuch. As to the local celebrities who frequent that busy centre, we turn them over to the tender mercies of the hotel "bouncer," who at 12 o'clock emptied this surfeit of greatness into the street and shut the door.

## CHAPTER VII. -

*Which Treats of Boarding Houses and Spirits and Wine,  
and Winds up With an Old Friend.*

We have expressed the opinion heretofore that the average boarding house keeper is suspicious, and gave reasons why he, she or it should be so. While on the subject we might as well remark that all boarding houses may be classified as follows: First, those who follow that business through choice. These are few and far between, and fortunate the boarder who finds one, as the fare is invariably good and the beds clean. Such houses are backed up with capital, and can dictate such terms to applicants as to preclude the possibility of swindling in nearly every case. The other class is the product of necessity, and comprises nine-tenths of all the boarding houses in Washington. In these may be found that vast army of swindlers and sharpers, whose sole object in life seems to be to prey upon mankind, and who appear to fear but one person in the universe, to-wit, their landlady. One glance from her at the breakfast table when his board bill is due seems to paralyze the toughest citizen to be found at her board. Having no capital beyond that paid in by her guests, and out of which a whole family, often including two or three worthless sons and a sot of a husband, are to be supported, it is no wonder that the keeper of a boarding house through necessity is generally hollow-eyed and suspicious. Too poor to turn any away, she is compelled to economize on such as pay in order to make up for those who steal. But not every one who shakes the dust of

Washington from his feet and leaves an unpaid bill behind is a swindler. Some of these men are lured to Washington by the promise of office. They carry a sum of money with them sufficient, they presume, to pay expenses. Their money is soon gone and they find themselves in a great city without a solitary friend in the world. In such harrowing circumstances, some make a full confession and throw themselves upon the mercy of the court, but the great majority make a bee line for home and carry on negotiations from a distance. One enterprising young fellow whom we encountered in Washington took a more original course than either of these. His landlady was a widow, he made love to her and married her, and thus, by tying the nuptial, cut the Gordian knot, ridding himself of a board bill, and insuring himself of a support for the time to come. This was a stroke of genius only to be accomplished by Napoleons of finance, who are to be found in third-rate boarding houses as well as Wall street. But the chief source of loss to the boarding house keeper is by means of the professional dead-beats, of which the Capitol is full. These conscienceless scamps, who hail from all sections of the country, and who name Senator or Judge So-and-So for a reference, are really citizens of the District of Columbia. Of course, when the landlady obtains an interview with the aforesaid Senator, or Judge, in reference to her guest he finds it out and seeks quarters elsewhere, where he uses the same racket. There is not one redeeming trait about these scoundrels. They are not seeking employment, would not have it if they could get it, in short, are not worth the hemp it would take to hang them.

But we must come back to our little dormitory, between which and ourselves a lasting attachment had



sprung up. Whenever we passed down the Avenue we always bestowed a fond glance upon it, and its one little window, with its four panes, six by eight, seemed to shine brighter by our recognition. In our darkest hour it gave us all the light we had, and in our hottest, all the breeze. Here, "far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife," upon our couch of straw, we had lain and pondered over the past, and set our plans for the morrow, and oh! ecstatic thought, should we ever become President (and why should we not) it will be pointed out with pride by the Capital guides in generations to come as having been the habitation of one of the nation's greatest sons, unless, perchance, some vandal should buy it for a dime museum to be exhibited at ten cents a head.

We have said most boarding house keepers are suspicious. Not so ours. From the first meal to the last, we never encountered Mrs. Parker. That was not her name, but it will do. We ate in silence with silent people; the servants wore slippers, and never rattled the plates; conversation, if carried on at all, was in monosyllables. The women looked haggard, the men unearthly.

"Every well-ordered and old established house has certain uses, traditions, manners and customs of its own." It is only the New Rich who are exactly like each other and have machine-made manners. Why not, if they copy good ones. The leading tradition of Mrs. Parker's family must have been silence. There was never any tramping heard in it, any clanging of gongs, ringing of bells, knocking at doors, striking of clocks, or chatter of servants. What could all this mean? We resolved to find out. We made bold to inquire of one of the servants as to the cause of all this phenomenal silence. The information came with startling effect from the lips of this inspired domestic.

The phenomenal silence of the house was rendered necessary by the presence of "spirits." We saw through it at a glance. We were in a nest of spiritualists. We resolved to abdicate at once. Our belief in the supernatural was first-class until we struck Washington in search of a government office. This had obliterated every trace of supernaturalism within us, without us and around us. "Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost." The office-seeker's slogan had done this dastardly deed. We desired no "second function." The first was sufficient. Having liquidated our lodging bill, which amounted to the enormous sum of twenty-five cents, we set out in search of another dormitory. As we were passing down the street whom should we encounter but our old friend of bygone days, Henry Brittle. Questioned as to where he came from and where stopping, he replied, "From Baltimore and at the National." We soon ascertained that Henry was out of business, having lost a fine job which paid him two thousand dollars a year, owing to dissipation, but in order to keep up appearances he had taken a room at the National Hotel, and was paying two and one-half dollars per day. I soon convinced him that he must abandon the National and seek cheaper quarters. He agreed to this, provided I would go in with him and rent a nice room together. I accepted this proposition, as he assured me that he could raise three hundred dollars, if necessary, in twenty-four hours. Accordingly we set out in search of a new domicile, which we finally secured from Mrs. P. on Four-and-a-Half street. The room was large, airy and well furnished, the bedding clean and the furniture new. The price was fifteen dollars per month, each one agreeing to pay half. We moved in at once. About midnight I felt something crawl across the back of my neck. Soon

I felt the same sensation on another part of my body. I bounced out of bed and lighted the gas. Henry followed me. We turned down the cover, and oh! horrors! It was one seething mass of chinchies. The battle between us had been one of blood, for we had furnished our enemy with it, and then compelled him to forfeit his life for it. The sheets were stained with it. Sleep was impossible. We held a consultation at 1 o'clock A. M., and decided to spend the remainder of the night at Henry's room at the National, as he still held the key to his room.

The next day we came to the conclusion that we would not inform Mrs. P. of the real status of affairs, but ask her to let us exchange our room for one on the lower floor, which we had a mind to take at first. She agreed very readily. Accordingly, we repaired to our new quarters. Now, whether our enemy upstairs, having gotten a taste of our quality, was pleased with it, and rightly divining our intentions to seek other quarters, had been on the *qui vive*, and overhearing the conversation between ourselves and Mrs. P., had anticipated us by moving in ahead, I am not prepared to say. But he was there all the same. Result: Another midnight conference, concluding with a second well conducted retreat to the National. We saw that a crisis was at hand, and debated as to the best plan of meeting it. We finally decided to make a clean breast of it, and ask Mrs. P. to let us off. I was selected to break the news. I never hated to do anything as much in my life. I felt persuaded a scene was in store for me. I was not disappointed.

When I returned from work at the Government Printing Office that evening, I called in and requested to see Mrs. P. She came in, and I told her as gently as I knew how of our misfortune, at which she flew into a violent

rage, and said she had hundreds of gentlemen to occupy rooms at her house, but we were the first to accuse her of having chinchies in her rooms, and that she did not believe a word of it. To which we replied, that if she would make an inspection of the battle-ground (to-wit, the bed) she would obtain proof enough of the truthfulness of our assertion, as it was crimson in places with the gore of our enemy. We then told her we did not wish to leave her unpaid and requested her to name the amount of the bill. She said she was a poor, lone woman, and should have a month's rent at least. I plead with her so eloquently, however, I suppose, that she finally compromised on six dollars. Considering we had not occupied the room a single night, this was pretty steep. But when you get your hand in a lion's mouth, you must get it out the best way you can. But having it in the mouth of a lioness is still worse, as the sequel will show. I now informed Mrs. P. that I would be paid off on Monday (this occurred on Saturday) and would call around that evening and pay up. This was agreed to. From some reason, needless to state, I had begun to despair of the financial soundness of my friend Brittle. He managed somehow to keep pretty full, but I never saw him handling any money. He was, however, one of the most plausible fellows in the world, of the most captivating address, and as handsome as Theodore Tilton, and he assured me that he was all right. However, when the day came around to pay Mrs. P., about 11 o'clock P. M., a few moments after I had been paid off, I received a note from Brittle, asking me to come down to the door of the office. As soon as I saw him, I knew there was something up, nor did he keep me long in suspense. He informed me that he had a dead sure thing on the races;



that he was just from the pool-room at the Imperial Hotel, and was in with the book-makers, and that by purchasing five dollars worth of "chips" or tickets, he could win forty dollars in a twinkling. He said he would divide half and half with me. I told him "No," that I was not a gambler, and did not care to invest that way. That besides, all my pay, except what I wished to send home, was already pledged, and that he must remember that we had promised to pay the room rent that evening. "Room rent; Hell!" he exclaimed, "Why I can raise one hundred dollars by calling on B. in fifteen minutes." "B." it may be remarked, was some invisible friend of his who had thousands, and was just dying to lend him all the money he wanted, but who, somehow or other, always failed to materialize. He assured me that I should have the five dollars back that very evening, and he would lend me twenty dollars on top of it, if I wanted it. With this promise I let him have the money. He agreed to meet me in the reading-room at the Metropolitan Hotel, at half past five o'clock, to return it. He then left, and I went back to my room to my work. I felt misgivings, and that old adage, "a fool and his money are soon parted," began to assume the aspect of a stern reality. My capital had once before been reduced to the *nth* power of a cent, and came near proving what the mathematicians term a "vanishing equation," owing to my disposition to succor the unfortunate, forgetting that I was one of them myself. I had learned to practice the most rigid economy, even going down so far as to make terms with the little hunchback who sold the *Evening Star* in front of the Metropolitan. The price of the paper was two cents. I offered to pay him one cent with the privilege of reading it in his presence, and returning

it in time for him to sell it again. This offer he accepted, and as he invariably sold it again for two cents, I had the satisfaction of knowing I had become an economist and philanthropist at the same time, for I saved one cent and the little hunchback made two. And now in spite of all this, here I was lending the enormous sum of five dollars to an impecunious friend, without one iota of security. I felt like locking myself in, and administering a good kicking upon myself for my stupidity.

But we must look after Brittle and our five dollars, and stop moralizing. We had begun an outline of our impressions as we returned to our work. A vague feeling that Brittle would turn up missing occupied us during the entire day, and was really the basis for the foregoing remarks. As soon as the whistle blew for the closing of the day's work, I set out for the place of meeting. As I was passing a Chinese laundry on 6th street, between C. and Louisiana avenue, I saw Brittle turn the corner, pass rapidly before me down 6th street to Pennsylvania avenue, where I lost sight of him in the crowd. Taking it for granted, however, that he was on his way to the rendezvous, I paid no special attention to it. Imagine my surprise then when I was informed by the clerk who knew Brittle well, that he had been there but left an hour ago. My heart sank within me. I saw through it all. Brittle was dodging me. I went on to my dinner with a heavy heart, which quite took away my appetite. Five dollars was no great sum, but to be deceived by one whom I had helped, and so capable of better things, was a painful reflection. However, I determined to hunt him up after dinner. After a long search I overtook him on the corner of Four-and-a-Half and the avenue. He was loaded with whiskey to the

gunwales, and as hilarious as an old hen who has just laid her first egg in the spring time. I was in no mood for trifling. Taking him aside I asked him how much money he had. "Not a d—n—d cent," says he. I asked him if he intended to ruin me. To which he replied, "Slick, you are a d—n—d fool." I told him that I was in search of information not already in my possession, that I had been aware of the fact just stated so forcibly ever since eleven o'clock that morning, when I handed over to him the amount of five dollars.

Finding that reasoning with him was like pouring water on a duck's back, I left him and repaired to the residence of Mrs. P. who was expecting me with the money. When I acquainted her with all the facts in the case, she began to weep. Just at this point her chamber door opened, and in walked a man fully six feet high, weighing at least two hundred pounds, broad shouldered, and looking as powerful and ferocious as John L. Sullivan. He spoke, and his voice sounded like the roaring of a bull at midnight. "What's all this I hear? Go sir, and tell Brittle that unless he has that money here by 7 o'clock, I'll have him arrested for obtaining money under false pretences, and will summon you as a witness against him." I saw he was attempting the role of a bull-dozer, and determined, if possible, to check him, so I made answer, "Not so fast sir, if you please. I have made no such assertion touching my friend. He belongs to a high-toned honorable family, and I cannot listen to such language. If he cannot raise the money, I can and will. But he still pawed the carpet and roared out "I'll do what I say, so help me God." Seeing he could not be assuaged I left and went at once to Brittle, to whom I related all that had passed. It is said that the

sight of blood, or a sudden blow, will sober a drunken man almost instantly. Be that as it may, the startling information I imparted brought Henry to his senses at once, and he flew into a furious passion, and he vowed by all the furies in the infernal region that he would cut his d—n—d intestines out. He used a shorter word, but not to wound my readers by giving a vulgar appellation to that portion of their anatomy so intimately connected with his or her happiness, we omit it. Brittle was no coward, and not knowing whether P. was or not, I feared there might be a difficulty, and tried to dissuade him from his intentions. It was to no purpose, and drawing his knife he walked rapidly towards P.'s residence. He halted in front of the door and called that gentleman out. He came to the door, but refused to descend to the street. After gesticulating wildly for a few minutes, Brittle became calm, and entered the house. It was fully an hour before I saw him again, but when I did, he was in the best possible humor, and in answer to my query as to Mrs. P., said, "she was the best satisfied woman I ever saw." Wishing to know how he accomplished so happy a result in so short a time, he replied, "Why I promised to pay her to-morrow by 12:00 o'clock sharp." He did not keep his word and there was another stormy interview between him and P., before it was finally settled. Not being a witness, I cannot speak more fully of it.

The reader may well imagine I wanted no more room-mates while at the capital, and if so, he imagines correctly. I concluded to go it alone in the future, and while it may have cost me a trifle more in money, it more than repaid me in other respects.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### *Mr. Cleveland's Baby Among Other Things.*

All great men have their peculiarities. Whether Julius Caesar ever owned a pet cat or no, history does not relate. It may be that his biographer knew all his weaknesses, but considered it beneath the dignity of history to describe them, and thus allowed the rugged outlines of his character to come down to us unmellowed by a solitary weakness except a propensity to scratch his head with his little finger, and even for that little touch of nature which makes the whole world kin, we are indebted to Cicero, his enemy, and it may be only one of that orator's figures of speech.

But, whether the ancients had pets or no, we are not left in doubt as to the moderns. Napoleon, as every school-boy knows, had his pet star of destiny. Most people handle their pets, but Napoleon allowed his to handle him. Then My Lord Wellington had his pets in a certain style of boots which bears his name, and which will make him remembered when Waterloo is forgotten. And the "Grand Old Man," William E. Gladstone, had a substantial pet in the shape of a six pound axe, with which he was wont to whack down a tree every morning, in order to whet his appetite for breakfast. And there was Prince Bismarck with his immense Siberian blood hound, crouching at his master's feet, or walking by his side as he strolled through the park. Coming over on our side of the Big Pond, we find all our great men more or less engaged in fondling pets. General Grant's pet was a good segar,

and he was very fond of it you may be sure. Some men make a pet of certain games, such as chess or checkers, and although looking at the board constantly, never seem to be bored. But Rutherford B. Hayes went a bow shot beyond all this, and made a pet of a returning board, with the most gratifying results.

But of all our great men, Grover Cleveland, a confirmed bachelor until nearly fifty years of age, chose the most singular object for a pet. It was a baby. It is true, that it was only his by adoption, as Senator Pendleton, of Ohio, enjoyed all the supposed honor of its fatherhood. It was born on the floor of the Senate of the United States. The late Senator Vance, of North Carolina, was requested to act as godfather to the child when it was christened, but the witty Tar Heel, from the very first, had no use for the brat, and refused to act in that or any other capacity for it. The babe was un-American, in fact, a cross between an Englishman and a Chinese, and Vance would not touch it with a "forty foot pole." As soon as born, all the stalwart Senators, both North and South, said it could not live, that our atmosphere was not congenial to it.

All the Senatorial friends of the babe, however, pronounced it a wonderful child, having the promise as well as the potency of all things political. An *Ave* was sung to its mother, "The Star Eyed Goddess of Reform." As soon as it had been washed and clad in its swaddling clothes, it was turned over to President Hayes, who had been designated as wet-nurse to this infantile prodigy. All sorts of predictions were made concerning it, when it would have arrived at maturity. Some thought it would surpass Hercules as an Augean Stable-Cleaner.

The cabinet and others, high in phrenological author-

ity, after a careful analysis of its head and body, gave it as their conjoint opinion that it would prove one of the greatest inventors as well as benefactors of this or any other age, that it would prolong official lives indefinitely, by throwing around them a network through which needy and unfortunate office-seekers and constituents could not squeeze. Congressmen laid the flattering unction to their souls that this great infant would diminish, if not drive away, the great crowds which surge and roar in the Senate and House lobbies from early morn until dewy eve. Some went even so far as to believe they would have time to make a tariff speech during a session. Those members who spent two-thirds of their time in the departments, hustling for crumbs for hungry applicants who dogged their footsteps at every turn, consoled themselves with the thought that they would be rid of all such, and could devote themselves entirely to the Agricultural Department, gathering in garden seeds for the voters at home, who count, and thus make their election, if not their calling, sure. But alas! Hardly had the brat laid aside his swaddling clothes and begun to crawl upon the floors in the departments, before he began to manifest such arrogant tendencies that he was universally despised by the leaders of both parties. His appetite to begin with, was so enormous that all the "pap" in Washington could not satisfy it. He laid the whole government under contribution, not being at all satisfied with his allowance. Dark hints and even threats of assassination by strangling were already heard in the House and Senate, while some of the great newspapers of the country, notably the *New York Sun*, were in favor of the instant dispatch of this un-American monster. But it was the royal infant, and like the White Elephant of Siam, its person was

sacred. Neither party dared lay its sacriligious hands upon it.

Such was the posture of affairs when Bachelor Cleveland became President. "Turn the rascals out" had been the slogan during the campaign, and it had been predicted that such an exodus from Washington would occur as had never been seen in this country before. But who can explain the idiosyncrasies of a man or a woman with a mission. Hardly had Grover gotten warm in his seat before the child was presented to him at the White House, by the three nurses, whom President Hayes had appointed to look after it in infancy. Now, that Grover is a shy, bashful sort of a man, is proven by the fact that he remained single so long. Imagine the laugh then, that echoed in those quarters, "where none die and few resign" when a morning paper stated in its White House reception column, that the President had taken the baby in his arms and imprinted a resounding kiss on the cheek of this execrated national infant; nay more, that he intended in his message to Congress, to inform that "practical" body that he was infatuated with it. Too true, in his inaugural, Grover stressed his affection for this adopted child of the republic, and called upon Congress, like Queen "Vic" upon Parliament, for a handsome sum for its maintenance. He employed another skilled nurse, to whom he gave directions, that, whenever the child, from any cause, needed removal from the malarial atmosphere of Washington, they should take it on a jaunt through the States, stopping only at such places, where it would be well received, and have the honors due to its exalted station paid to it. Grover's passion for it became a perfect mania. It was at the White House frequently, and if he heard it cry, even at the midnight hour, he would



bounce out of bed instantly and give it a dose of Curtis' Specific or Dr. Eaton's Soothing Syrup. The result was, as every one expected; the brat was spoilt to death, and became a perfect nuisance. But Grover never recovered from his infatuation and still coddles it to this day, although it is no longer a child, but wears a number ten shoe, as Col. Ingersoll has most wittily said of some other "infant industries." Such is a brief outline of the rise of that *enfant terrible*—Civil Service Reform.

It is time for us to return to the narrative. I left off by saying I had been promoted to the position of copyholder. Lest some of my million readers should be compelled to consult the dictionary, and as they may not all possess that commodity, I will explain a little. A copyholder then, is an assistant proof-reader. He reads aloud from one copy while the proof-reader does the same silently from another. There were some ten or fifteen of each in the room, and when they all read at once, they "made Rome howl." I sometimes read aloud for twelve hours, but wearying as it was, it was heaven to what I had been doing. Still I was not satisfied. True I had entered the citadel as a result of the summer campaign, and resolved to allow my veterans—(M. C.'s who had helped me to victory) much needed rest. There is no doubt they were in want of it. General Jackson is famous for having fought and defeated two armies in one day. My troops had not only made forced marches, but sometimes fought half a dozen unsuccessful battles in the different departments in a single day. I did not allow such signal courage and devotion to go unrewarded. Nay, verily, as the Washington columns of the *Weekly Fog-Horn*, published in the Sand Hills of Alabama or the Pittsylvania *Hot-Blast* will attest. There the true patriot and lover of

daring deeds can read the record of their mighty achievements of how their white feather, like Henry's of Navarre, could be seen waving in every department of the enemy, from the White House to the Turnip Seed Department of the government; of how, fresh from a hand to hand conflict with the Public Printer, they charged full tilt and headlong against the serried columns of Boutelle's division on the floor of the House, or held listening Senators spell-bound with the thunders of eloquence. Yes, the boys needed a rest, and I had resolved to let them have it, while I was busy with the details of the spring campaign. Of all the fortifications with which the enemy has entrenched himself in the Capital, the civil service redoubt is the most formidable. Senator Vance attempted to carry it at the point of the bayonet, but was repulsed with heavy loss. Hon. Samuel J. Randall hit upon the only available method, which was to starve out the garrison. But his *confreres* on the Committee of Appropriations, while declaring the feasibility of the plan, and avowing their desire to carry the fortifications, were not in favor of such a barbarous method of warfare. So it was left to the sappers and miners at last. These having provided themselves with the necessary implements of such warfare, the principal of which is a capacious memory, an enormous supply of arithmetic, history, geography, astronomy, chemistry, reading, writing, and spelling, proceed silently to the assault. Should they succeed in carrying the outer works, they are provided with a scaling-ladder, known as "certification," which is stored away in the arsenals (on file) of the respective departments to be used as occasion may require. As (none die, and few of those so fortunate as to have carried the last line of the enemy's entrenchments, ever resign), the whole army of

the "certified," like Hannibal's host before Rome, goes into winter quarters, and lives on hope through the winter, even if they die of despair in the spring.

The magnitude of such a campaign made us ponder as well as pause. Hitherto victory had invariably perched upon our banners. Were we approaching our Waterloo? Not if we could help it. Napoleon paid special attention to small matters, and left the great to take care of themselves. Great matters are only small ones aggregated. The great wheel is of no force with the little one missing in machinery. The Civil Service is a very complicated piece of mechanism, requiring a great deal of government to run it. I got a model of it which the managers furnish to applicants and examined all its parts minutely, until, as I thought, I knew it thoroughly. I had been a teacher for fifteen or twenty years, an editor and a book-keeper, and there was no use of "cramming." At the day appointed I was on hand. The first thing on docket was to answer the following questions of a personal nature:

#### ARITHMETIC.

No. 1. What is the rule of "addition, division and silence"?

No. 2. What is the political value of "soap" if it saved Indiana?

No. 3. What is the combination 8 to 7 equal to?

No. 4. Which is the greater man, G. Cleveland or George Washington?

No. 5. Is the interest a politician takes in a voter compound or simple?

No. 6. Is the treatment accorded to a defeated candidate, bank or true discount?

No. 7. If a politician promises a friend the Turkish

Mission, but sends him to Greece, would you call it partial payment? (Note.—You can answer this on a separate piece of paper.)

No. 8. If a Congressman mixes four ounces of ice, worth five cents a pound, one ounce of sugar, worth fifteen cents a pound, a gill of whiskey, worth twenty-five cents a pint, with two gills of water, worth nothing, how much does he lose by not drinking it straight?

No. 9. When a Congressman promises a place to a friend, but gives it to his own son, would you call it cancellation; and if so, what is the rule in Washington?

No. 10. If a member of Congress cannot live on his salary, how does he live?

No. 11. Is a fifty thousand dollar president equal to two twenty-five thousand dollar ones?

When we had gotten through with this list of valuable points in arithmetic, we moved up a peg and struck history. We have always prided ourselves on this branch of human learning, and never for a moment doubted we should carry this line, even if we failed on arithmetic. It is true the comprehensive nature of the first questions were too much for us, but we imagined ourselves safe on history. Here is the historical *menu*:

No. 1. Who was the first President?

No. 2. Was he in favor of female suffrage?

No. 3. If so, what female? (Note.—The applicant may state whether it was Mrs. Frances E. Willard, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, or Susan B. Anthony.)

No. 4. What was the age of Susan B. at that time?

No. 5. Was William L. Marcy, or Andrew Jackson, the author of Civil Service Reform?

No. 6. Is George William Curtis, or Dorman B.



Eaton, the author of the proposition that "To the victors belong the spoils"?

No. 7. Who is the author of the letters of Junius?

No. 8. When did the last government clerk die?

No. 9. Did he die of old age or commit suicide?

No. 10. If the former, state the cause.

#### GEOGRAPHY.

No. 1. What is the population of Ellenville, N. Y.?

No. 2. Is there a paper published?

No. 3. Who edits it?

No. 5. Where is Buzzard's Bay?

No. 6. How was the name derived?

No. 7. To what does it owe its fame?

Not having stuffed ourselves with arithmetical, historical, geographical, philosophical, astronomical and chemical "chestnuts," the reader may imagine how dumbfounded we were in thus being compelled, as it were, to plunge into the profoundest recesses of arithmetic and history. We were too much discouraged to proceed further. Some prejudiced persons in Washington had told us that the Civil Service was a humbug, and that the commissioners were a lot of cranks who spent their whole time consulting Joe Miller and every other joke book in the land, for conundrums, etc. That the gentlemen have been slandered, the list of questions cited above, abundantly shows. We left them a better, if not a wiser man. Of course we failed. It may have been because we attempted a victory without the help of the Old Guard (our M. C.). At any rate, we retreated gracefully to our first line of battle—the proof room of the Government Printing Office—and went into winter quarters at once.

Of all places under the sun, Washington abounds most

in cranks. Whether this is owing to the presence of so many in one body at the Capitol, we cannot say. There is the patent medicine crank, the religious crank, the female suffrage crank, the labor crank, the black crank, the white crank, the yellow and the red crank. But of all the cranks we met there, one whom we will call Golightly excelled them all. Golightly, at one time, was proprietor of a peanut stand at the corner of Seventh street and the Avenue, adjoining the St. Marc. As a peanut vender he was a decided success. Having accumulated a few thousand perhaps, he became ambitious. He determined to oppose Hon. Charles T. O'Ferrall for Congress in the Seventh Virginia District. As a preliminary to this, he began to antagonize President Cleveland. For this purpose he rented a hall and had his posters scattered along the Avenue, stating that on a certain evening therein named, he would attack the administration. When the evening arrived an immense crowd was in the hall. Golightly mounted the stand, and the applause was tremendous. We see him now, the light streaming on his flushed face, his little squirrel head inclined to one side, a visible smirk of the self conceit that devoured him, portrayed on his face. Poor fellow! Little did he know, though every one else did, what an ass he was making of himself. Then he began, and such a speech. It is past reporting. It brought down the house at every paragraph; the crowd came to laugh and laugh it did to its heart's content. When he closed his effort, a magnificent bouquet was handed him bearing a card with the compliments of the President. In the centre of this, hid from view, was a dead rat. He received it at the footlights, with all the pride of a young debutante. But, alas! that rat brought him to his senses. He left the house in

disgust. We only heard of him once more. He went to Colonel O'Ferrall's district, made one speech, quit the scene and went West. Perhaps he was killed in the Seventh District, as in Washington, with a bouquet. Golightly was a "daisy" you may be sure.

Then there was the religious crank, only he had sense and Golightly did not. He was an Irishman. We first saw him in the Postoffice Department in search of a job. Our next meeting possesses so dramatic an interest as to merit a full description. About this time a Holiness meeting, so called, was in progress in Washington. A large tent, holding perhaps fifteen hundred people was erected on one of the squares, and was packed daily and nightly with immense crowds. Our curiosity was excited, and being somewhat of an Athenian, we desired to hear of this new thing. The minister who held forth laid down the following proposition: "All men are depraved by nature. Sin is the result of depravity. Ergo, we must be rid of depravity ere we can be rid of sin." He then argued that inasmuch as man is not responsible for depravity, God cannot forgive it, and whereas sin is the result of depravity, when God forgives sin He will remove the depravity also, if you ask Him. This last, he said, was "The Second Blessing, and without it no man could have assurance of salvation." Not being much of a theologian, and what little theology I did have, having become well-nigh obsolete by coming in contact so often with heads of departments, members of the House, Senators and Supreme Court Judges, I determined, if possible, to learn more of this new theology, as the old appeared to have no effect on the consciences of Congressmen. Accordingly, having seen a notice in the *Evening Star* a few evenings afterwards, that a meeting for church



members' benefit especially would be held at Brother C.'s house, on M street, on the following Wednesday night, I determined to attend it.

When I arrived upon the scene there were about one hundred men and women in the room, with the Irishman aforesaid as the Mercurius of the meeting. I was considerably taken back at this, as he was well endorsed by Hon. Simon Cameron and other astute politicians, which spoke well for his membership of the Republican party, but I was not prepared to see him essay the *role* of a leader in holiness. At least his endorsers never manifested a weakness of that sort. However, he took the stand, and when he opened his mouth I caught the following: "Me brithren and sisters, when I landed in this coonthry, I had only fifty cints in me pocket and the grace of God in me heart, and now I have experienced this blessing of which I was ignorint intoirly, and have a good situation under the government." He then urged all members of the church present to come forward and be "sanctified." Nearly every one in the room except myself and a red-headed Scotchman obeyed the call and knelt at the altar. After a short interval, the last mother's son and daughter of them arose and made a profession of entire sanctification. Then it was that a committee of old women advanced upon the red-headed Scotchman and myself. They asked me if I was a church member. I told them I was a Methodist. "What!" says an old lady, who stood directly in front of me, "a Methodist and not believe in sanctification?" I told her I believed in it, but not as she did. "Well, then, how do you believe in it?" I told her I did not believe you could jump into it, for the Bible does not say jump into, but grow in grace, and that all healthy growth was slow. She then left me, re-



marking, "I am much afraid, young man, you will be lost." The old sister need not have had any fears on that subject, as we owned ourselves in a *lost* condition as soon as we struck the crowd in that room. Having gotten all the audience except myself and friend of the fiery locks sanctified, he began, as the boys say, to show his hand. He untied a large bundle and at once began the sale of small pamphlets containing, he said, hymns of his own composition. They went like "hot cakes." As soon as this neat stroke of business was over, the next thing on the programme was a crusade against the use of tobacco in any form. He declared it was a sin to use it, that the Holy Spirit would forsake the heart of anyone who did. As I had a quid of the dimensions of an English walnut stored away in the capacious recesses of my left jaw, I began to feel uncomfortable, and whereas I had felt no desire to spit before, it now seemed as if every gland in my mouth had raised its flood-gates, and it was as full of tobacco juice as an egg is of meat. There was no place to spit except on the carpet, and as that, according to my way of thinking, would be a sin sure enough, I had but one resource left, to swallow it, which I did. I was now prepared to resist the most powerful appeals. The excitement over the use of tobacco soon exceeded that over sanctification. Persons got up all over the room and confessed their sins in this respect. At last an old lady, wearing one of those peculiar bonnets in fashion forty years ago, arose. Her keen black eyes, far back in her head, shone like a ferret's. Her chin, which was long and had an upward curve, came nearly in contact with her nose, which, perhaps, in compliment to her chin, curved downward. Raising her long and lank right arm, and letting it fall heavily, she began: "When I was down in Ann

Arandell county I had my 'pyip' (for pipe) in my mouth all the time. When I wanted to praise the Lord, there was that pyip in my mouth, and I could not say a word. I prayed to the good Lord and He took that pyip out of my mouth and flung it away, and ever since that time it has been Glory Halleluiah." The effect of this speech was electrical. There was shouting and clapping of hands all over the house. My red-headed friend could not stand the pressure. He fell on his knees and began praying, "Oh! Lord, take the taste of tobacco out of my mouth." I made for the door and left. About a week afterwards, as I was passing down the Avenue, I saw my friend standing in front of Willard's. He was chewing tobacco as fast as a billy goat masticates a circus poster. I halted and exclaimed, Hello, old fellow! What! chewing tobacco again? I thought you were converted the other night. "So I was," says he, "*but I fell from grace.*"

It is not the aim of these sketches to inculcate any new system of moral philosophy or religion. The old ones promulgated from Sinai and the Mount of Olives are good enough for us. "Shooting folly as it flies" or sits either, for that matter, is our aim, and we can do it best by simply holding the mirror up to nature without comment on our part. But we cannot help remarking at this point, that if you wish to see how confidence may be lost as to the sincerity of any one's religion, let him or her attempt to make merchandise of it, as this fellow did. The only mystery about the whole affair was that anyone could have been found silly enough not to have seen what his object was. As for the old woman and one or two men present, they might have supplied Charles Dickens or Victor Hugo material enough for a half dozen characters, which their readers would have pronounced impossible. Is it any

wonder that the North is the hot-bed of every new *ism* under the sun, when a shrewd Irishman could “pull the wool over their eyes” with his sanctification blarney after this fashion. The Northern people seem to think there is nothing sacrilegious in making money out of religion. The Southern people do. And right there is where the two people begin to differ, and they never cease until the conviction is born that the Northern man is an arrant hypocrite and the Southern intolerant. Both these may be true, and the choice lies as to which is the most despicable character. While the North professes to love the down-trodden and oppressed everywhere, a residence of several years there has convinced me that their love for the negro has no higher principle than their hatred of the Southern white man. A still longer residence in the South convinces me that a Southern white man can only tolerate a Northern one in proportion as he conforms to Southern ideas of propriety and civil government. The Southern man can tolerate the man who drinks, swears, and dissipates, but has no use for one who, while singing Psalms through his nose, is propagating a scheme to enrich himself, or teaching the most rank heresy. At the North, Anarchism, Socialism, Nilhilism, Henry Georgeism and every other *ism* seems possible. At the South, under existing conditions they are utterly impossible, and are, therefore, never attempted. The question then may be put, Can they ever be one people? With all due deference to the opinions of others, we answer, Never! The Northern monkey, in order to get his chestnuts out of the fire, may profess great love for the Southern cat, and the farce may be kept up as long as this necessity exists. But if left to decide as to who is the best friend of the South, the Northern Democrat or Republican, we would answer,



neither. The Northern Democrat, for political reasons, professes great friendship for the Southern white. The Northern Republicans profess, for the same reasons, great friendship for the Southern black man. The South is aware of this, and for political reasons, acts with the Northern Democracy. The whole thing is a perfect farce, so far as genuine friendship is concerned, for there is none of it. Perhaps you do not believe this. Well, then, get your member to procure you a subordinate position in one of the departments in Washington, keep your ears open for one month, and let me hear from you at the end of that time.

When we began to descant on the beauties of Civil Service Reform, we were in the proof room of specifications of the Government Printing Office. We will return to it. We said there were ten or fifteen proof-readers there. Let us take a look at them. A glance at their heads and features reveals the fact that they should be men of more than ordinary intellects. And so they were at one time. They had been poring and pondering over words, periods, and fly-specks until their minds had become microscopical, and an idea larger than a pin's point would have split their skulls wide open. We are not saying that a little idea is not of as much value to the world as a big one. In fact, we believe it is more so. Men of big ideas generally turn up in the chain-gang or the work-house, and a few end their existence in a more dramatic way than either of these. Men of big ideas generally have but one, and that one is nearly always wrong. There was, for example, Guiteau. He had a big idea, and but one, and in carrying it out, carried himself out with it, which was the most creditable thing about it. But it would require a volume to relate the misery brought upon mankind by men with



big ideas, while as to the woman with one, "angels and ministers of grace defend us!"

But we said the minds of these proof-readers had become microscopical. This was perfectly natural. The human mind becomes professional. Take an illustration. An artillery officer, passing by some beautiful elevation, would say: "What a place for a battery," and a minister would say, "what a situation for a church," a pedagogue, "what a site for a school-house," while the man of capital would say: "A fine place for a suburban or country residence." Just so with our friends, the proof-readers. So much accustomed were they to the proper way to convey an idea that they lost sight of the idea itself. That this habit of mind leads to superficiality, just as one person who has no other way of judging of another except by the clothes he wears, there can be no question. A proof-reader must be correct or nothing, and this tendency sometimes threw the whole room into confusion. It is hard for even a proof-reader to decide as to the difference between a period and a fly-speck. On such awful occasions, the whole room would pour the full force of its united intellects on the burning question at issue. First would come Morse, the Nestor of the room, and a splendid judge of small matters. Adjusting his double convex glasses, he would gaze at the disputed spot with all the rapt intensity of a Herschel gazing through his telescope at some planet hitherto unknown. Failing to reach a decision by this means, he would bring a magnoscope, which he always kept, and which would magnify a hundred fold. By this time the whole corps would be gathered around the desk in question, and, after a look, each one would give his opinion in turn. Marston, from Philadelphia, was of the opinion that the matter should be settled by the sense

of the paragraph, and not by that of sight. He would argue, and argue ably, that there was no sense in a fly-speck at that particular juncture. Frost, who was from Georgia, would argue that he was an authority on fly-specks, as flies did not hibernate in his State, and he, therefore, had double the facility of any other man in the room for deciding the vexed question. Bradly, who was from Maryland, spoke very wisely in saying that in a matter of so much importance they should not act too hastily; it was one requiring very great deliberation, as the honor of the whole corps was involved in their decision. Platt, when called on, would give such a prodigious sneeze that he startled every individual fly in the room, causing them to fly away in search of pastures new, and thereby preventing the boys from obtaining any new evidence, as it were, from the most recent sources, to-wit, the flies themselves. Another candidate for the honors of punctuation, a dark horse by the name of Lavalette, would be put in nomination, but failing to get the required vote of two-thirds, he too would retire. As a last resort, finding they could not agree, the whole matter would be referred to Stoner, an authority in the patent office, and the room would once more resume its tranquility and pursue the even tenor of its way.

But now a marvelous change came over the spirit of my dreams. The President, after allowing Mr. Rounds to remain in office a year and a half, at last requested his resignation. He appointed as his successor Thomas E. Benedict. Benedict was a nonentity from the interior of New York State, hailing from Ellenville or Sallyville, or some other obscure village only known to the local geographer of the neighborhood from where he came. When Cleveland fished him up from the vasty deep of ob-

seurity, the following facts came to the surface with him: He was at one time a member of the New York Assembly, where, it is said, he had achieved the reputation of a rigid economist. We have always observed that when a public man is entirely destitute of talent, he always turns his attention to economy, it requiring no gifts of mind to be stingy, nor any sacrifice of your own, to curtail the salaries of others; for if there is one solitary instance of an economist cutting down his own salary we cannot recall it. In fact, their interpretation of the passage, physician heal thyself, should be changed so that the word heal should be spelt "h-e-e-l," for that is what they generally do while in office. Benedict was a long-legged, lantern-jawed, raw-boned, sandy-haired specimen of a rural New Yorker, and in addition to his legislative experience, was also editor and proprietor of a weekly newspaper in his native village. This is, we believe, a full account of all the facts that could be gleaned in regard to him before his advent in Washington. Shakespeare says, "Some men are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them." Benedict belongs to the latter class. No one in these United States except Grover Cleveland would have ever brought such an obscure person into such sudden prominence. Grover was brought in that way himself, and having survived the shock, concluded perhaps, that his friend could do likewise. But he was mistaken. Benedict thrust away the greatness thrust upon him faster than anyone we ever knew. The poor man was bewildered, demoralized, nay, all but paralyzed. Accustomed to swearing at the "devil" and a couple of printers perhaps, in the office of a weekly newspaper at Ellenville or Sallyville, he suddenly found himself placed over one of the largest establishments, employing more



skilled labor, and requiring more brains than any other like establishment in the world. Is it any wonder the poor fellow was at sea, and knew not which way to turn. But the insolence of office, like smallpox, is very contagious, and he had not been in office two weeks before he had assumed all the airs which are supposed to throw a halo around official heads. But "uneasy lies the head that wears a crown." The law requires that every one filling the office of Public Printer shall be one himself, that is to say, a practical printer. Now Benedict was ignorant of the art of setting type, and as he had to be confirmed by the Senate, he kept his insolence in bounds. The reason was this: The Senate was Republican by a small majority, and should Benedict begin his game of economy by discharging printers too soon, he ran the no small risk of returning to Ellenville or Sallyville and obscurity, before he, as an official baby, had been washed, dressed and stored away snugly in the public crib. As a consequence of all this, the time-servers in the office knew not how to trim their sails to catch the breeze; the timid fellows quaked in their boots, leaving such as knew they had to go sooner or later, the only happy ones to be found in the building. But at last the Senate christened the infant, and forthwith the official axe began to fall.

The first heads to roll into the basket in the Specifications Room were those of Miller, the foreman, and Stimson, a copy-holder. As these two men were sworn enemies, and frequently threw the proof-room into an uproar with their quarrels, it might be said that although not as lovely in their lives as David and Jonathan, yet in their deaths they were not divided. Miller was a Republican, Stimson a Democrat, endorsed by the Democratic Senators and members from North Carolina. His dis-



charge showed plainly enough that Benedict was not a Democrat, or that he made some sort of a bargain with the Republican Senators in order to be confirmed. A taste of blood seemed to whet the appetite of the Public Printer. He began his official slaughter now by wholesale, every Saturday evening, and the whole force of two thousand men would be thrown in the utmost consternation. Strong men would be seen weeping, as they received the fatal yellow envelope containing their doom, which was to be turned into the streets of the city without employment in the dead of winter, many of them with large families to support. Others not given to the melting mood, would indulge in imprecations dire upon the head of the upstart belowstairs. Sturdy Democrats, veterans of many hard fought campaigns against the Republican party, as they saw themselves thrust out of even this poor place by this pretended Democrat, would vent their rage upon Cleveland himself, and swear they would never lift a finger for the party again. One of these I encountered a year afterwards in a Southern city, when Cleveland had been re-nominated by the Democratic party. He was from South Carolina. He asked as soon as I told him "howdy," how I intended voting and when my answer was given, he urged me by all that was good and bad to vote for Harrison. "Not that I have anything against Cleveland," says he, "but, how can you reach Benedict in any other way."

And so the slaughter continued from week to week. Miller had been replaced by E. W. Oyster, who was like Major Bagstock, "deep and devilish sly." As for ourselves, when Honorable George C. Cabell was defeated, we knew our fate was sealed, and prepared for it. We had seen Democrat after Democrat from the South walk the plank, and expected no quarter. We were not disap-

pointed. On Saturday, March 19, 1887, we received the following document in a yellow envelope:

GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE, March 18, 1887.

*Mr. Samuel Slick, Jr.:*

I am instructed by the Public Printer to inform you that your services will not be required in the office after this date.

W. T. BRYAN,  
*Foreman of Printing.*

We were reading copy at the time we received this portentous document, but did not open it until we had discharged our day's work, as we did not care to swindle our poor government out of five minutes' time. When the day closed, however, I went to the foreman's room and requested the assistant foreman, Walter Mills, to extend my condolence to Benedict, and tell him I knew he would have a hard time without me; that, in fact, I could not see how he could run the office in my absence. And sure enough, it was not a month after we left Washington before there was the loudest sort of complaint on the floors of Congress that the *Congressional Record* was not fit for a dog to read, and that constituents who were just dying to read the last speech delivered by their members on the tariff, could not get them, as they were in the hands of the public printer, and that they might as well have been sent to the Chinese Embassy, with expectations of seeing them again.

And here endeth the last chapter of the first part of this veracious history.

## Part Second.





## CHAPTER I.

Hannibal after enjoying the sweets of Italy for fifteen years, is said to have taken a tearful leave of the land of Tasso, Dante and Alfieri. Napoleon is said to have wept in bidding the Old Guard farewell. But our leaving Washington, the scene of many conflicts, and around which cluster so many memories, sweet as well as bitter, was attended with no tears. Far from it. We were in no mood for them at that time, though nature itself was in mourning as if for our departure. The streets were full of slush ankle deep, the heavens were black with clouds, and a blinding snow-storm was in progress. Under such ominous portents as these, we pulled out from the 6th street depot of the Richmond and Fredericksburg railroad, Monday morning, March 21st, 1887, with but one solitary companion in exile—Amos Keeter, who was compelled to walk the plank the same day with ourselves. We left the rush and roar of the great city, the hopes of official preferment, but most of all, official slavery behind us. We were as free as the birds of the air. No petty government boss to crack his official whip over our heads. No time keeper poking about to see if we were in our places. No more government employment for us. We have had enough of it to last a life-time.

It is not a case of "sour grapes." Have not we been up the trees and know all about it? We fought as hard as ever man did to get a position; we got it with great joy, and gave it up without the least regret. Isn't that comprehensive enough? Oh no! all the fools are not dead yet, and never will be as long as the world stands, and

so Washington, the morning we left, and the day after and every day since, has been filled with an ever increasing crowd of hungry applicants, male and female, who look upon a place in Washington as just the next thing to Heaven, and worry both themselves and their Congressman into the other place trying to get one.

Did we leave no friends in Washington with whom it was painful to part? We only had three. Two of these I left in Sodom, the other I brought with me. The atmosphere of Washington is not conducive to friendship, as we have already shown. Pigs are not very friendly around the trough that has the milk. Two cats trying to lap out of the same plate are not wont to indulge in love pats. Every man in Washington, who is not a tourist, is after something. If you are there, you are after something, and the fact that you and a hundred others may be after the same thing, is not so conducive to confidence and friendship, as some other things we might mention.

But Washington is a fine place to live in when you have money. So are hundreds of other cities in the Union. But there is one feature about the capital in marked contrast to other places. There is no pretense in regard to poverty. The Washingtonians "make no bones" about their contempt for the greenhorn without guineas. He is a tough citizen with them as soon as that fact is ascertained. And why should they not? What right has a *poor* fool to be found in such an elegant city as Washington, with its Senate of Millionaires, its beautiful parks and playing fountains. His member would as lief see the Devil himself. Then why expect a Washingtonian, accustomed to the sight of the Capitol Park, the Smithsonian, the Soldiers' Home, and the Corcoran Art Gallery,

to put up with the sight of a lousy loafer from the States. The very idea is preposterous. Nine times in ten when he does "put up with him," he finds all the plate missing the next morning. Oh, but you will say, "There are honest poor men in Washington?" Well, suppose there are, what business have they there? If they had any they should attend to it, and not be seen loafing around the hotels, paining the eyes of the well-dressed people with plenty of money in their pockets, or paralyzing the clerks with their brazen poverty. No, we repeat it. Poor fellows have no business in Washington. Nobody wants them there, I am sure, and no self-respecting poor man ought to be seen where he is not wanted; and where that place is in times of peace, the Lord only knows.

We were speaking of the morning we left, and we should not omit one item in our leave taking, to-wit: The state of our exchequer. When we were given our "walking papers," we drew from Uncle Sam forty-five dollars due us for services rendered. Deduct from that twenty-six dollars paid out for board and lodging, and you have the precise amount with which we turned our faces homeward. My companion, Amos Keeter, of whom I have spoken, was not so fortunate, being without a dollar. We concluded to come by way of Richmond in search of employment. The ticket to that point cost me seven dollars and sixty cents, expenses there for one day for two, amounted to three dollars, and tickets for two to Lynchburg, to ten dollars more, expenses for two one half day there, one dollar and fifty cents, one pair of pants four dollars and fifty cents, other incidental expenses en route two dollars and forty cents, balance on hand equal to nothing. We were eighty miles from home, without money and, of course, without friends.

Nature however, had supplied both of us with an excellent pair of legs, and as legs do not require payment in advance for travelling, we resolved to use them. Accordingly, about 2 P. M., we shook the dust of Lynchburg from our feet, via Virginia Midland Railroad. I had taken the precaution to lay in a supply of bacon and hard tack for the march. Living eighteen miles due south of Lynchburg, was an old friend of ours by the name of Haden. We had not seen him for fourteen years, but, having ascertained that he was still in the land of the living, we pushed on as rapidly as possible in order to reach his house before nightfall. We arrived there about 10 o'clock at night, and after hallooing at a high rate for half an hour, failed to rouse him. It was too dark to travel, and nothing else was left us but the alternative of camping out. Accordingly we made for a thicket of pines on the east side of the railroad. It was bitterly cold, and the March wind was howling at us like some mocking demon let loose upon us to laugh at our situation. Having cut down a goodly number of young pines and placed them bottom upwards around us to keep off the wind, we lit our camp-fire, and proceeded to make ourselves at home by toasting cheese, which when spread upon the hard tack was quite toothsome. Having listened to the souging of the wind through the pines, having drunk to the full the poetry of the situation, and having cracked many a joke at our own expense as well as that of others, we at last fell asleep and slept the sleep of the just. At the first faint streak of light in the East, we awoke. The cause was this: Without knowing it, in the darkness, we had pitched our tent near the abode of a farmer, and when he called his hogs in the morning, we answered to the same by awakening. He soon perceived



the smoke curling up above the pines, and at once advanced towards us to inspect the cause. When within a few feet of us, he stopped, and brushing the undergrowth out of his way, made a careful inspection. Seeing no chicken feathers lying around, nor pots boiling, he passed on. Poor man! Little did he imagine he was gazing at one backed by an entire Congressional delegation, two Senators, and a Supreme Court judge. Little did he imagine the young man with me would one day convulse villages and cities with laughter at his matchless impersonations. Not he, or he would have invited us to take breakfast with him, and thereby honored his family with our acquaintance. And so the world goes, misjudging its great men, until the great man doesn't care a straw for its judgment one way or the other, as did Dr. Samuel Johnson in regard to my Lord Chesterfield. Moreover, could this tiller of the soil but have known it, politics not only make strange bedfellows sometimes, but strange beds also, occasionally.

However, whatever the farmer may have imagined, we promptly arose, ate our breakfast of toasted meat and hard tack, and resumed our march. Amos had friends seven or eight miles further on, and when we arrived at that point, he went into camp for a week, and I took the train and landed on my baronial estates without a dollar.

## CHAPTER II.

Office-seeking as well as office-holding is a disease, having both types, mild and malignant. The former may be cured if attended to in time, by the application of some other good business, a rich wife, or some other wind-fall. But the malignant type is past remedy. Why we have known fine lawyers, whose practice was worth fifteen thousand a year, gladly surrender it for a seat in Congress worth only five thousand. We have known men of business, worth \$200,000, living in luxury and splendor, lying awake at night and worrying themselves to death with schemes to get a nomination to the State Senate, at the pitiful stipend of four dollars a day.

These office-seeking, office-holding sufferers are divided into two classes. Those who want the honor, and those who want the salary. Now, I, Samuel Slick, Jr., belong to the category last named, agreeing with my great friend, William Shakespeare, that inasmuch as honor in the absence of money will not set a leg, or fill an empty belly, as set forth by that eminent Attorney-General of Virginia, F. D. Blair, some years ago, and which great law point still holds good notwithstanding the assaults made upon it by other great constitutional lawyers, whose abdomens were in a flourishing condition.

This being so, and my official disease, recurring again on account of the malarial atmosphere, produced by Mr. Cleveland's second term, I once more resorted to the famous official health-giving resort, Washington, D. C.

Now, I had sized up your Uncle Grover, as I thought,

pretty well during my previous experience with his first term, and determined to profit thereby. As is well known, Grover has held office all his life, and ought to know how one is gotten. And it must be confessed he has one trick of the political cards, which for fineness has never been excelled, and that other men may profit thereby, we will expose it. For instance, while the "machine" is grinding you out as a candidate, stand in with it; while the leaders and bosses are managing the campaign for you and doing the dirty work, or having it done for you, keep your mouth shut. But as soon as the battle is won, and the men who elected you come around for any little favors that may be lying loose around the White House, why then, give them the cold shoulder. Now mark the effect. The politicians begin to curse and swear at you like the army in Flanders. As soon as this occurs, someone advertises you as not standing in with the gang and that you are above such, that you are a statesman with a capital S, and that since you have hoodwinked the politicians, you are greater than they are, and as the people who have been looking up to their representatives, and now see them tumble down, conclude of course, you are the greatest man in the country, and therefore greater than your party. Do you see the point? After this the rest is easy, and as the great mass of mankind mistake thunder for lightning anyhow, and your great statesmen have only to give vent to a few ponderous commonplaces, which, like a Delphic utterance, may mean something or nothing, and the job is done.

But before repairing to the capital, I had accumulated a little more political capital, alias, party credit, as I imagined, and laid several politicians under some strong obligations to aid me in my second assault on the office-

holding intrenchments at Washington. For instance, I had edited a campaign sheet entitled "*The Alliance—Democrat*," in which I proved that Claude A. Swanson was a great man, and that Grover was also great, in both of which undertakings I must have been successful, as they swept the Fifth District like a whirlwind, and Claude has been there in Washington ever since.

Hence, when I went to Washington, it was with an air of confidence. Daniel Webster said of Alexander Hamilton that he smote the rock of our national credit, and treasures gushed forth. With a feeling somewhat akin to this I packed my grip, and having secured a free pass over the Midland road, I hied me to Washington. As I still controlled the campaign sheet aforesaid, I wrote letters to it, telling of my progress, as a general would send dispatches to his government detailing his operations in the enemy's country. Here is

#### LETTER No. 1.

WASHINGTON, D. C., May 25, 1894.

As soon as I arrived here, I determined to call on Grover, as I had received several pressing invitations to call at the White House. I did so, but, to my great astonishment, I found my friend—the President—overcome with grief. Wishing to ascertain the cause of his depression, I was told by him that he had no one to blow his horn in the Senate Chamber, and even when he tried to have a *Hornblower* in the Supreme Court he was foiled, for as fast as he sent in a nomination that blasted little game rooster from New York—D. B. Hill—would Peckham all to pieces.

I next called at the Treasury Department. As you all



know, Secretary Carlisle is very polite to strangers. In fact, the stranger you are, the more polite he is. He asked me if he could be of any service to me, and I told him I had just read in a Washington newspaper that the oldest person in the United States was in the Treasury Department. He smiled, and said he did not know about that, but was satisfied there were a great many ancient Republican office-holders in the building, some of whom had come in muster free during Lincoln's first term. He asked me if I had a copy of the paper containing the item, and I at once produced a copy of the *Washington Post* containing an article headed—Seigniorage in the Treasury; what shall be done with it?

Some people had told me that John G. Carlisle has never been known to laugh since he came to know he was born east of the Ohio river, and realized he was ineligible to a presidential nomination. It is all a mistake, as I can testify from personal observation. He broke into such a fit of cachination that his son Logan came rushing from an adjoining room, fearing the worst should happen to the nation should his father die from cachination. I left at once.

Wishing to know if Secretary Gresham had received any late advices touching Honolulu, I went over to the State Department to see that astute politician. The Secretary and myself are chums, so to speak, both of us having quite recently come over to the Democratic party, he to accept the portfolio of State, and I to take anything I can get. Of course, I expected a cordial reception, and I got it. As soon as he saw me he exclaimed, "Why, Hawaii, old boy, I'm glad to see you," and taking both of my hands in his wished to know what he could do for me. I told him I was in search of information rather than

office, but if there were any consulates lying around loose I was open to an offer. He replied that if George D. Wise allowed any office to go unsought it was because he could not find a constituent to fill it, and that his quota was full. I replied, it made no difference, as I was a Democrat now and not a Mugwump, and was merely joking about a consulate, as I did not think of leaving my country in its present deplorable situation when it so much needs the services of her most talented son. The conversation then turned upon the "Hawaiian Muddle," and Walter gave me the true inwardness of that affair, which I, as a patriotic American citizen, feel called upon to impart to my distressed countrymen through the columns of my paper.

He said: Mr. Slick, as you well know, Cleveland spent the greater part of his life as a bachelor in one of the interior cities of New York, living in apartments to himself and doing his own cooking. Very frequently, when funds were low, he would dine at lunch counters, his menu consisting of a ham sandwich. This became his favorite dish, and I may say, tinctured his whole after life. Anything that smacked of ham enlisted his sympathies at once. This is why he retained Fred Douglas in office so long during his first term and appointed another negro to fill his place when he resigned. The public never knew this, but what is the use of a man holding my office if he does not catch on to State secrets. Do you see?

Well, when this Hawaiian affair came along, it was a foregone conclusion how Grover would act. "Lil" was a descendant of Ham, and Queen of the Sandwich Islands. The association of ideas was too great for Grover, and he tumbled to the racket at once. Hence his infatuation for

her dusky majesty. Hence the Hawaiian muddle. It may seem like a breach of confidence to blow on Walter in this way, but when the greatest interest of my country is at stake, when it is literally dying for information, so to speak, I am bound to speak out. Then besides, the reputation of Grover Cleveland is dear to me, for having held the office of plasterer under him during his first term, it is but natural that I should want to "whitewash" him ever afterwards. Bidding my friend Gresham a painful adieu, I next wended my way to the Department of Agriculture, as I wished to obtain some fresh data concerning the ravages of insects.

Mr. Morton informed me that while Mrs. Lease, Governor Lewelling and the grasshoppers were still "bleeding Kansas," he had nothing fresh to impart. The entomologist of the department, however, was preparing a large volume entitled "*Vestigia Goldbugiensis*," which would be circulated gratuitously by him. Thanks! thanks! George D. Wise! Who will say you should not be renominated. The man who shows the people of the Metropolitan district how to get rid of goldbugs will render his country a service compared to which even that of Pasteur must pale.

The conversation then turned upon the weather, and I asked the Secretary how he accounted for such phenomenally wet weather, to which he replied, that it was all owing to the United States Senate, and D. B. Hill in particular. Now, I am logical or nothing, and you may well imagine my surprise at receiving such an answer, and when I had recovered from the shock I ventured to ask how the two agencies referred to could produce such a result. His reply was a crusher, so to speak. "Why, you know," says he, "Mr. Cleveland recently sent in the

names of Hornblower and Peckham to be justices of the Supreme Court. Now, both of these gentlemen are dear to the heart of every mugwump, and when they were both turned down every mugwump in the United States and Canada wept so profusely that it affected the atmosphere, for their tears, being too pure to mix with common clay, did not assimilate with the soil, but ascended on high." I said the conversation turned on the weather, and when the Secretary concluded his remarks the weather turned on the conversation, for the rain began to pour down, and I left. I had intended, at this point, to ask the learned Secretary some questions concerning the effect of garden seeds on legislation, but will reserve this branch of conversation for another occasion.

When I reached my attic room in Swampoodle (I always move in the upper circles) I found a message awaiting me from the President, inviting me to call again at the White House before my departure for Virginia.

Getting my blacking brush, which I always carry with me to prevent annoyance from street Arabs, and which also saves me from the wisp fiends at hotels, as I use it as a hair and clothes brush, I soon had myself *en regle* and set out. Arriving at the Executive Mansion, I was at once ushered into the President's private room. Having drawn the blinds and stuffed a newspaper wad in the key-hole, Grover gave a premonitory tap on his nasal organ, as much as to say, "the word is mum," and taking a seat near me he said in a confidential tone: "Mr. Slick, I have just heard through a confidential friend in my employ in the State Department that Gresham has made known my weakness to you; in short, has revealed my craze for ham sandwiches. Knowing you hail from a section of the Union where anything connected with ham is liable to



suspicion on the very face of it, and as I am a candidate for a third term, I have sent for you to implore you not to expose me in Richmond, where I have just done a fat thing for her people, in giving the post-office to Mr. Cullingworth." Continuing, the President said he had never felt the iron enter his soul until Gresham gave him away. He had taken this man from a little District Court in Indiana, an avowed Republican, whose only claim to recognition was that on account of a grudge against the size of Ben Harrison's hat he had bolted the ticket of his party. From the manner in which he has just treated me, I am inclined to believe that he was only "speaking through his hat," when he professed to admire me. At the conclusion of his remarks, with a heart overflowing with sympathy for the shattered condition of Mr. Cleveland's spinal column, concerning which so much has been written, I assured him his secret was as safe as a Herring with me, and that my whole life had been spent in hiding the weaknesses of other men and exposing my own. At this he seemed greatly relieved, and began asking me questions concerning local and State politics in Virginia. Among other things, he was anxious to know why the *Times* and *Dispatch* devoted so much space every morning to election methods in Virginia. I told him as near as I could come at it, their readers liked that sort of thing, and they wished to supply a long felt want. He said he was struck with one thing though, and that was the *Times*, although alleging that politics was conducted on a low plane, yet the discussion was on a high one. I told him in case the *Times* won the decision it would do so with a full hand, as it would hold high, low, jack and the game.

Mr. Cleveland wished to know if I would not under-

take, as his representative, to pacify these worthy gentlemen of the quill, as it was well known that he was the last man in the world to stir up strife in the Democratic ranks, and had given nights as well as days to level the Hills and remove the noxious Flowers in New York, so that no Croker could raise his voice. I informed the President that local self government was a cherished principle in Richmond, and would brook no outside interference, and, in my judgment, the olive branch would not flourish there at present; not, at least, until the whole stock of choice newspaper adjectives had been exhausted. "Perhaps you are right," said he, and he dropped the subject.

He then told me to present to Mr. Cullingworth his kindest regards, and to assure him he enjoyed his plum pudding ever so much, and hoped, in return he would enjoy his "plum patronage" equally as well. Who, after hearing this pathetic recital, will not feel his heart warming towards Grover Cleveland? Here we see the man as he is. No demi-god, but having like passions and weaknesses with common ordinary mortals.

Although President Cleveland has so honored your humble servant with his confidence, still the opportunity of obtaining information on the various topics from one nearly as eminent as myself, was too good to be lost. And so with apparent reluctance, I once more sailed into national politics as follows:

Mr. President, I see that Lafe Pence (at the mention of whose name Grover laughed outright) says that the Populists will sweep the country next time. What do you think of that? At this Grover, who had been laughing, as I have just said, assuming a graver aspect, replied: "Sweeping this country, Slick, is a big job, especially with a stick broom. Why, you might as well try to dip

the Potomac dry with a teaspoon, or tunnel the Blue Ridge with a toothpick. This boast of the Populists is in keeping with their predictions hitherto. They put in a shoe-string and expect to pull out a tan-yard at every election. Why, in Kansas, where they have full sway, finding they cannot control the State, they have *Leased* it out, while their representative in the Senate is fuller of beard than brains."

This last was a dig at a Populist in the Senate. I thought this was a good time to find out Grover's ideas as to "Woman's Rights," and so I asked him to tell me.

"Well," says he, "I will make a confession; the greater part of my life, as you know, was spent in single blessedness, and like all inexperienced men, I had a poor opinion of 'Woman's Rights.' But since marriage, my opinions have undergone a radical change. I have a very great respect for 'Woman's Rights' right now. In fact, I have found out she has more rights than I ever dreamed of, and besides, she has a way of enforcing them that no one in a single state can conceive of." As Grover uttered this last sentence his voice was down to a whisper, and I noticed he eyed the paper wad in the key-hole keenly. "Why," says he, resuming, "would you believe it, little Esther was nervous and restless last night, and rather than disturb Mrs. Cleveland, who was fatigued by a State dinner, held during the evening, I got out of bed and for two mortal hours paced the floor of the White House before her infantile lungs gave out."

At this point Mr. Cleveland heaved a deep sigh, and said, "Ah! Slick, little do the people of these United States realize the care and responsibility of a Democratic administration."

Being a fellow-sufferer from the cares of office (babies),



I deeply sympathized with my distinguished fellow citizen. As soon as he recovered somewhat from his paroxysm of grief, I ventured to ask him what his opinion of the Republican party was. He replied at once: "I have no opinion at all of the G. O. P. (Great On Pulls), where high taxes are concerned. In fact, I have just ascertained that since the Republican party came into power the making of shoe pegs has almost entirely ceased, and nearly everybody has *tax* in their shoes. In fact, I verily believe Dingley would tax the atmosphere if he could find a place to stick a stamp on it, and then parcel out the whole country into atmospheric districts, and thus create another army of office-holders to worry the very breath out of us mugwumps." I asked about the dispute at Blue Fields over the Mosquito Territory. He said he had given a great deal of attention to the question of mosquitoes since he came to the White House. In fact, he had lain awake many nights in July, August, and September, trying to arrive at a satisfactory solution of this burning question, but so far had not been able to do so, as the mosquito, like Tom Reed, is always ready to count a *quorum*, even if only two are present—yourself and himself—and proceeds, as soon as roll call is over, to get into business. I then took my leave, highly impressed with the fact that our President is a remarkable man, and by strict attention to business for a few years longer may become eligible to a third term, W. J. Bryan to the contrary notwithstanding.

I next proceeded to the House of Representatives and sent in my card to Hon. Jeremiah Simpson. Jerry was some time in coming out, and when he did come he was a "stunner." He had on an old broad-brimmed woolen hat, a pair of blue jeans pants, with patches on the knees,



a coat of similar stuff, and a cotton shirt. He wore brogan shoes, without socks, and a wisp of wheat straw with a patch of hair protruded through a hole in the top of his hat. He at once offered an apology for his appearance by saying he thought I was a constituent from Kansas, and that before coming out he had gone to his Populist wardrobe and rigged himself out to meet the crisis, as he would lose his seat in Congress should one of his constituents catch him in the habiliments of an eastern "tenderfoot." I assured him that his apology was scientific, if not ample, and proceeded to business, which will be given in my next letter.

Yours,

SAM SLICK, JR.

#### LETTER No. 2.

WASHINGTON, D. C., June 1, 1897.

I promised in my last letter that I would get down to business in my next, and so I did. The usual course an office-seeker pursues in Washington is this: He selects in advance some position he desires, makes out his application to his representative, gets it endorsed by the said Rep., his heelers, and bottle holders, and hies himself to the Capitol and calls upon Hon. William Blank, known at home as Bill Blank. He calls at the House, gets in the lobby and sends in his card. Soon out comes "Bill," all smiles, as he shakes your hand, and tells you that old, old story over again in these words: "Why, hello, me boy, I am glad to see you. When did you arrive? Had I known you were coming I would have met you at the depot." What a prevarication to be sure. Why, he is regretting that the confounded train that conveyed your confounded carcass hither did not fly the track and break your neck

before you struck Washington. But there's nothing like being polite, even while scuttling a ship or cutting a man's throat. And so we will let it go at that.

In my case, however, it was different. My member is a hustler from way back, and has gotten more offices for deserving men than any man of his size in Congress. And what is still more to the point, he is a truthful man. Hence, in my interview with him at the Capitol, he informed me that my case was hopeless, that I could procure no office under a Democratic administration, as the Republicans held them all. In fact, from conversations with our leading men here, I am convinced that Grover has an acute attack of *megacephalis*. He is not the only man in history who has suffered from it.

Just so in the present instance, "Your Uncle Grover" is firmly possessed with the idea that he will go down in history as The Restorer of the Ancient Religion, while all the rest of mankind will regard his destruction of the Democratic party as his masterpiece. That the world is right there can be no question. It may be that Grover thinks as the world does, and is only prevented from saying so by his extreme modesty.

In estimating this great service which Mr. Cleveland has rendered to American mankind, we must not overlook the fact that men who rid the world of nuisances are just as great benefactors of the human race as those who create new systems of statesmanship and finance. Why the fame of Hercules is just as great if not greater than that of Lycurgus or Moses, and yet it rests on the removal of nuisances alone. It may be, however, that "Your Uncle Grover" is a constructive genius after all, and realized that the best and only way to destroy the Democratic party was to restore The Ancient Religion. If he thus

reasoned, he was entirely correct, for success has crowned his efforts.

That in blotting this party out of existence, Mr. Cleveland has rendered mankind a service far superior to that of Washington, goes without saying. The latter repelled a foreign foe, but Grover has killed a domestic one of a most dangerous description, one which, from the beginning of the government, the titans of this country have labored to destroy by abuse, by argument, by ridicule, by oppression, by force, and by theft. Mr. Cleveland, who has the reputation of being a long-headed man, clearly perceived that the Republican party was unable to accomplish what it had so long desired and sought, and, although his own religion was the same as theirs, yet, by the invention of a few new phrases of a taking nature, he knew he could pull the wool over the eyes of the disciples of Jefferson and stand forth as "The Greatest Living Democrat."

As the readers of my largely circulated journal may surmise, I was shocked to learn such things of our Democratic President, for whom I had written so many able editorials to prove that he was the Greatest Living Democrat, D. B. Hill to the contrary notwithstanding. And now to find this Greatest Living Democrat was the sole survivor of his party. There must be a mistake, and not being the man to labor under one if I could help it, I determined to call at the White House once more before I shook the dust of Washington from my feet. I called. In a few minutes, the Great Restorer of the Ancient Worship came in, and after giving me a cordial grip of the hand and a hearty "Howdy-you-do," invited me to take a seat. I at once opened the conversation by informing His Excellency that I was from Virginia, was preparing a sketch of his life, and having heard much of him of a derogatory



nature, I desired to have a denial from his own lips of the worst charges, as I was persuaded they were not true. He wished to know at once what the charges were, and I told him that the people were complaining that the Worship of the Golden Calf was costing us entirely too much. "I expected that. It all comes from the damnable heresy of free salvation (silver). A religion not worth having, did not cost anything." He then explained that in order to set up the Golden Calf, a great deal of the "yellow metal" was necessary, and in order to get it he was compelled to issue bonds and sell them. He further informed me that cost what it would, he intended to persevere until the Ancient Religion was fully established.

At this point he gasped, and after passing his hand across his forehead a time or two, asked what progress the Ancient Faith was making in the Old Dominion. I told him that in the cities very good, as their inhabitants were worshippers of the Golden Calf before his time, but that in the villages where they had no temples (national banks) it was slow, while in the rural districts the Old Democratic Religion was unshaken. Wishing to know the cause of this, I informed him that the people were greatly influenced by Daniel, the Prophet of the Old Dispensation, one of the most eloquent men of the South, and that he still prayed three times a day with his face towards Monticello. He then asked me what Archbishop O'Ferrall, of the Diocese of Virginia, was doing, as he had not heard anything from him for some time. I told him "Charles was sawing wood and saying nothing at present," since his chances for election to the Ecumenical Council in the place of the Prophet Daniel were a little hazy at present. "How about the newspaper press?" "Well, sir, in the cities where the calf is strong there are several



which ably, day in and day out, urge his worship, and among them all the *Richmond Times* had produced the strongest arguments." "What about the country weeklies?" I told him they were well-nigh unanimously opposed to the Ancient Religion, so much so that whenever a man sent by them to the Ecumenical Council in Washington voted for it they "roast" him to such an extent for so doing, that it impairs his health so much that he does not deem it advisable to run again.

At this stage of the interview with the Great Destroyer I interposed the following query: "Is it not true, Mr. President, that when you were a candidate that the tariff question was foremost, and that bimetallism was in the platform on which you ran and was elected?" Before replying, Your Uncle Grover lifted his left hand to his left eye, and raising the lid thereof, said in his most impressive manner: "Slick, do you see anything 'green' in my eye? Would you expect me, the Greatest Living Democrat, to repudiate a platform ere I had ridden into the White House upon it? And having shown this much common sense, would you expect me, after the election, to carry into effect theories which I have condemned from the time I first tasted the sweets of office? Surely not." "But, Mr. President," says I, "what becomes of us poor, free-silver editors under this arrangement? How are we to justify ourselves before our sixteen-to-one readers?"

"Mr. Slick," says he, "listen to me. Carlyle says the population of England is thirty millions, mostly fools. Is not this the case in the United States also? 'Don't believe it?' Why, go up yonder on the hill and look at the representatives sent here from the South and West. Do you think sensible people would send such cattle here? Why, it is self-evident. For you free-silver editors, your

course is plain. If you can get the majority of them to agree to such a fool proposition as free-silver, why you can get them to agree to anything else, it seems to me. Go back home, Slick, advocate sound money, and tell the people what fools they are and they will soon think how wise you are. Do you see?"

Here the interview was interrupted, as the Recorder of Deeds for the District of Columbia, a colored Republican whom the Great Destroyer had appointed to that fat office, and who had been twice rejected by the Senate, called to pay his respects to the Greatest Living Democrat. As soon as his name was announced, Grover asked me to excuse him a few minutes, as he wished to get my views on the currency and some other topics of an absorbing nature.

He then went to the door leading into the Blue Room and met his dusky worshipper. All up-to-date office-seekers carry an audiphone with them, as they rightly value the part which whispers have had in deciding the fate of mankind. And so, no sooner was the Greatest Living Democrat out of sight than I dropped mine to my right ear. It is well I did, for had I not done so Mr. Cleveland's friends would have missed one of those inspired utterances for which he is so famous. He told his pet that a fellow was back there in the room, the editor of a Southern newspaper, and as he was off-color on the race question, coming from that benighted district south of Mason's and Dixon's line, he would best call again in the afternoon, when no Southern Democrats would be around, and that he was very sure this one was after an office of some sort, and having no idea of giving him one, his (the pet's) person might so inflame him that he would not be responsible for what might happen. With many

expressions of interest and good will, the Greatest Living Democrat and the darky bade each other adieu.

Returning to the room, Grover renewed the conversation in that direct manner for which he is so famous. "Well, Slick, tell me what effect my currency policy is having in the South." I told him it was proving a blessing in disguise, that owing to the effects of slavery, the people of the South were constitutionally lazy, but that under his masterful policy of contracting the currency, they had to hustle or die. At this he seemed greatly pleased; noticing which, I remarked further that any statesman who could devise a sure cure for national laziness would prove himself to be one of the greatest benefactors of his race this world has ever known. That even so profound a statesman as Josh Billings says there was no cure for it, though a second wife sometimes hurried it a little. I further informed His Excellency that his policy was very stimulating to certain other branches of industry besides laziness. It had given a great boom to the ancient and noble art of lying. That Democratic candidates for Congress would soon be as proficient in this elegant accomplishment as their Republican competitors. At this point Grover said he did not quite catch my drift, and asked me to be a little more explicit. I told him that Democratic candidates had said in case of your election the people would roll in clover, that silver would be so plentiful that they would plant cannon in the mountains and shoot it all over their districts. That times would be so good they would see the advent of the millenium with the first Democratic administration in forty years. On the contrary, times were harder than ever, and they would have to explain the reason why. How they can do this without lying was a conundrum, sure enough. As I said



this a shadow flitted over the face of the Greatest, and he said: "Slick, is there no branch of legitimate industry improving under my administration?" I told him yes, sir. There is one. Under your masterful policy the egg trade has become our chief branch of business. So much so that our country merchants have been compelled to enlarge their capacities for handling the output. In fact, Mr. President, so great is the dearth of money that the egg, instead of the dollar, has become our unit of value. Our fourth-class post-offices would close out for want of business but for eggs in exchange for stamps. The egg is now known in the South and West as "Cleveland currency," and we suggest that in your forthcoming message to Congress, that you recommend the hen as the national emblem instead of the eagle, as her output had become a part and parcel of our great fiscal system.

At this point Your Uncle Grover heaved a deep drawn sigh and exclaimed: "I'm blasted, Sam, if you are not too slick for me. But say, Slick, is there anything I can do for you?" I told him there was, but a bar sinister stood in his way, and I did not wish to embarrass his administration, already weighted down with the load it had to carry. "What is your bar, Slick," says he. "Why this, Mr. President, I am a Democrat." "O, that is no bar, if you are one of the right sort." Here Grover put me to guessing, and I said: "What does your Excellency mean by the 'right kind' of one?" "Why this," says he; "one who has never been an active party worker. One who is patriotic enough to let his name go before a convention of his party, and failing to get the nomination, repudiates it and its platform. In fact, Mr. Slick, I want no man in office under me who is not both party and color blind. Hence, when a man is recommended to me for appoint-



ment I never ask, 'Is he white or black, Republican or Democrat, but does he approve of my administration?' 'I only draw the line at Populists.' A public office is a public trust, and while it has been a private snap to me all my life, I will not allow any 'pernicious activity' in anybody's interest except my own. Now, Slick, where do you stand?" "In with the gang, your Excellency." "To the victors belong the spoils." "If not the victors, to whom shall they go?" "To the vanquished!" "No, Slick," says he, "you are off. You forget that Select Scholarly Class of men, who take no interest in politics until after the election, and who are then willing to make a sacrifice to themselves in filling the offices of their beloved country. I see you are not the kind I am after. You are too much of a Democrat, and would embarrass me greatly. I admit no one into my official palace who was not one before, or promises to become a political eunuch as soon as he is admitted. By this arrangement, I am the Greatest Living Democrat, as all my followers, including my Cabinet, are dead ones."

At this point Grover said: "Let us change the conversation a little." I said all right; I thought it needed a change. "Well, Slick, tell me what are the leaders doing in old Virginia?" Discussing a problem in mathematics," says I. "Discussing a problem in mathematics? What in the name of common sense do you mean? What is the problem they are discussing?" "Why, this, your Excellency: Your followers say you are the whole thing; the opposition says you are only a part, and hence the discussion turns on whether the whole is equal to the sum of all its parts, or whether one part is equal to the whole." "Slick, I am blamed if you are not a dangerous man; you know too much about the Greatest Living Democrat

to remain in the United States, as I am a candidate for a third term. Say, how would a consulate on the coast of Africa suit you?" "Not at all," says I; "I am from the South, and have been sufficiently amused with Africa already." "Well, then, as a last resort, Hoax Smith is getting afraid of the Free Silver Snollygostors in Georgia, and talks of resigning. How would the Interior Department suit you?" I said: "I am much obliged, Mr. President, but I am afraid it might revive painful memories." "Slick, what on earth do you mean?" "Why this, your Excellency: I was an applicant for office under your first administration, and my interior department gave me so much trouble before I got the job that I am afraid my appointment to this particular office would revive such painful memories that I could not stand it." At this Grover fairly roared, and here this memorable interview ended.

## · THE LAST CHAPTER.

It is customary with novelists in the concluding portions of their works to dispose of their several heroes and heroines in a manner suitable to their characters and situations. We would do likewise.

Your Uncle Grover, upon retiring from public life, went first to the coast of Massachusetts. Here, in leisure hours, while fishing, he meditated much upon the disease of the Democratic party, and set about to invent a remedy to cure it. The disease, which was known among the doctors of the party as *Argentia Dementia*, or the *Free-Silver Lunacy*, had seized nineteen-twentieths of the party, in spite of the heroic efforts of Dr. John G. Carlisle, Dr. A. P. Gorman, Dr. Bourke Cockran, and other famous specialists. Eight years ago several other physicians of the same way of thinking had assembled at Indianapolis and concocted a pill known as the *Palmer and Buckner Gold Standard Cure*. But the people repudiated it, coming from them, and said if they must take it they would get it from a regular practitioner, and not from a lot of quacks. Meanwhile Dr. William Jennings Bryan, of Nebraska, was denouncing from every stump in the United States this Gold Cure of Dr. Cleveland's as an invention of the devil. The result was, the party was divided into two hostile camps, the one advocating Dr. Bryan's *Silver Elixir* for all the ills the financial body is heir to, and the other Dr. Cleveland's *Gold Standard Specific*. In the one camp were all the unsafe and insane, and in the other the sound and safe. The result was that the party of Jefferson was on the point of going to pieces

through discord and lack of harmony. Then it was that Dr. Cleveland saw an opportunity of rendering Democratic mankind a lasting service. Repairing to Princeton, N. J., he established a sanitarium for the cure of political lunacy in the high places of his party. His success was not rapid, but sure. The first sign that Dr. Cleveland's medicine was working was the desire for harmony.

Meanwhile the time was at hand for the party to assemble and name a candidate for the Presidency. It met at St. Louis July 6, 1904. The thought uppermost in all minds was "harmony." Hence a prescription that would produce it and which the "safes" and "unsafes," the "sanes" and "insanes" could all take, required the services of the most eminent medical talent in the party. With this end in view, Dr. David B. Hill, of Albany, N. Y.; Dr. John W. Daniel, of Lynchburg, Va.; Dr. John Sharp Williams, of Mississippi; Dr. B. R. Tilman, of South Carolina, and many others, were appointed to do this very thing. After an arduous session of three days and nights the committee announced its great harmony prescription. It was accepted by all in a most enthusiastic manner, except Dr. Bryan, and a few other incurables. Dr. A. B. Parker, of Esopus, N. Y., and Dr. H. G. Davis, of West Virginia, were nominated to administer the prescription to the people of the United States.

And now comes a sensation. When Dr. Parker read the prescription next morning, he at once wired the convention he would neither take the medicine himself nor recommend it to others unless it was labelled "The Gold Standard Cure." The result was astonishing. Dr. B. R. Tilman for a short while lost his head, and got as mad as a wet hen. Dr. Cockran, whom the final dose had made



sick at the stomach, had fled to Indianapolis, where the Palmer and Buckner memories still lingered. As soon as he heard of Dr. Parker's telegram he so completely recovered that he hired a special train and fairly flew back to St. Louis. Dr. David B. Hill, whose maxim is "Tread softly and carry a big telegram up your sleeve," he "jess laffed." Dr. Daniel, whose restoration to sanity is beyond question, gave in his adhesion to Dr. Parker's suggestion at once. Not so Dr. Bryan. He wished to wire back for specifications, but failed, and the label went on as requested.

And now we have a united Democracy, resulting from this wonderful specific. It has and continues to work wonders. See some of its wonderful cures. B. R. Tilman is entirely harmonious; John Sharp Williams cries for it night and day; John W. Daniel sings its praises; William Jennings alone says it is bitter and comparatively valueless. But as it will not harm his political anatomy he will gulp it down with a wry face. And lastly, Dr. Cleveland, who once destroyed his party, will now go down in history as its great and only restorer.

Neither is the G. O. P. without its ills. Just at present, and for some time past, it has been suffering from a complication of diseases known as Tariff Tumors and Megacephalis. The former had grown to such an enormous size and was so full of pus that Dr. Cummins, of Iowa, an eminent Republican specialist, advocated an operation for letting out some of the corruption. The late Dr. M. A. Hanna, their highest authority, opposed this Iowa idea, and recommended a Stand Pat Poultice of his own invention, which was adopted. As to its other ailment, Megacephalis, they knew there was but one cure for it, to-wit: Renomination and defeat at the polls, and

they let it go at that. And now all is harmonious, as the following account of its convention, lately held in Chicago, shows:

(From Memphis Commercial Appeal of June 24, 1904.)

"It is all over, including the shouting. The Republicans have met in National Convention, done what Mr. Roosevelt ordered them to do, and now they are plodding their weary way to their several homes. Dazed, dispirited and dumb, they are wondering what they went to Chicago for, why they stayed there three or four days, and what they did while they were there. Even the consolations of inebriety were denied them. They were gagged, chloroformed, tagged and padlocked, and all that they were required to do was to make signs. They return home full of swamp gas and satiated with sawdust. They have been fed on Roosevelt's pictures and are now suffering from an acute case of interlocked jaws. Indigestion and despair have marked them for their own.

"The Republican National Convention was the most remarkable affair of the kind that the world has ever known. Notwithstanding the fact that Mr. Roosevelt is an itinerant hair-raiser, the convention that was to nominate him in a burst of wild enthusiasm was only a continuous yawn. It began with manifest reluctance. The delegates entered the Coliseum like pall-bearers who had come to pay their last sad respects to the deceased. Evidently they would have preferred to witness a horse race or a baseball game, but a decent respect for the opinions of their constituents compelled them to attend the funeral.

"More than one thousand vacant seats testified to the popular enthusiasm for the great Bowery statesman, the mighty Bombastes whom the convention was expected to nominate. The contrast between this scene and that of

four years ago, when William McKinley was renominated without opposition in a whirlwind of enthusiasm, and Mr. Roosevelt accepted a nomination which he had previously declared he would under no circumstances accept, was both painful and pathetic.

“As a hippodrome it was a marked success. Countless pictures of Roosevelt had been tacked up all over the hall, to inspire the delegates with enthusiasm, but the only effect seems to have been to give them an abnormal thirst, and a reckless desire to escape. The convention began fully an hour late. A disconsolate band played popular airs that sounded like the Dead March from Saul and the Funeral March of a Marionette, but the audience and the delegates refused to be beguiled. Occasionally a wearied statesman would stroll down the aisles, and give the crowds a signal to applaud, but they were too drowsy to observe and too listless to obey. Secretary Shaw solemnly took his seat on the platform and looked about with a receptive expectancy, but the popular impression was that he was the undertaker. Several Republican Senators came in and took their seats without being identified by the Pinkerton detectives present. They had probably been drilled into a proper submissiveness and ordered not to divert any of the enthusiasm from the Main Performer. The latter was not to be present, it is true, but like Charles of Sweden, he had sent his boots to preside over the gathering.

“It was a hot day. Especially was the air close and oppressive in the Coliseum. The hopeless automatons ‘set and sweat,’ but did not philosophize. Soft eyes looked doubt to eyes that spake not again, and all went merry as a funeral bell. It was not unlike a banquet of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery of Boston in the Cata-

combs, or a Sunday-school picnic in a railroad tunnel. But all of a sudden the air was tempered with mediatorial vapors, the thermometer began to fall, and the ladies present mechanically felt for their wraps. A cold night air seemed to pervade the great building. A chill fell upon every heart.

“Henry Cabot Lodge had entered the hall and mounted the platform. After that there were no more complaints of the heat. The audience passed from India’s tropic coral strands to Greenland’s icy mountains. There was a quick transition from hot to liquid air. For Mr. Lodge is the embodied essence of icicular radium. He has all the genial magnetism of a Dakota blizzard. His hand is as warm as a piece of Parian marble, and his heart is as tender as his conscience, and his conscience is as tender as the hide of a pachyderm.

“The blessing of Almighty God was with felicitous propriety invoked on the convention by the Rev. Mr. Frost, and the Hon. Elihu Root, delegate at large from the Open Polar Sea, made an address which could not be heard twenty feet from the platform, and satisfied many of the delegates that he was reciting “The Beautiful Snow.” A very unfortunate *faux pas* marred the beauty of this bit of elocution. Before the convention assembled, First Assistant Sergeant-at-Arms Owen assembled the 1,800 rooters whom he had engaged for the occasion, and addressed them as follows:

““I want you men, when the portrait of President Roosevelt is unveiled on the stage, to remember your duty as Republicans. This is going to be a quiet convention. People are not enthused over it, and they will have to be worked up. When that picture is unveiled I want you men to cut loose and keep on cutting loose until everybody



present begins to feel that this is a National Convention, inspired by red blood. Now, you understand your duty, and see that you do it.'

"Then Mr. Owen had a talk with the man who was to pull the string that would open up the great oil painting in which Mr. Roosevelt is drawn several sizes larger than Goliath and nine shades fiercer than the King of the Cannibal Isles. The man behind the string was told that Mr. Root had carefully prepared his speech under the right eye of the Commander, and that in it he paid a magnificent tribute to Mr. Roosevelt, the hero of the hour. And so when the man behind the string heard Orator Root pronounce the talismanic name of Roosevelt, he was to pull the cord and let those stately features flap bravely to the polar breeze. Thereupon the 1,800 rooters would do the rest, and the papers would chronicle the marvelous outburst of spontaneous enthusiasm.

"Mr. Root, when in consultation with Mr. Roosevelt, had decided to wind up his speech with an apostrophe to the President, and thus the picture would cap the stately climax of oratory. Unfortunately, he extemporized somewhat, and early in his speech he alluded casually to President Roosevelt. The man behind the string caught the name, gave a mighty pull and out popped the megatherian portrait. Mr. Root was taken by surprise, the Messrs. Rooters were thrown off their guard, and the grand climax was utterly spoiled. Just as soon as possible the picture was yanked off the stage, and the man behind the string was carted away to the Morgue.

"From that time on the convention was hoodooed. The mechanical effects were too transparent. The charm of illusion was entirely absent. Henry Cabot Lodge brought the resolutions from Washington in a sealed packet. They

had been written or edited by the President and then carefully embalmed. Mr. Lodge read them with all the eloquence of a paraschites; but they were utterly meaningless and void of promise. They pledged the Republican party to nothing. It is to stand pat on the tariff or not to stand pat, as may be considered advisable. They pronounce for and against revision. They turn the party position on the trusts so as to catch the people and the trust contributions at the same time. Not a single, direct and unequivocal pledge is made the people on any question. No wonder the platform inspired about as much enthusiasm as would the reading of the Egyptian Book of the Dead.

"Nor were the proceedings vitalized when the nominations were made. It was known that the speech nominating Mr. Roosevelt had been submitted to him and revised. Thus it became virtually his own speech. And then again the nominee for Vice-President is a man who inspires as much enthusiasm in a crowd as a manikin, and is about as congenial in his manners as a mummy of the Thirteenth Dynasty.

"The proceedings of the National Republican Convention were marked throughout by a fateful lack of enthusiasm. The applause was paralytic and perfunctory. The proceedings were cut and dried, and the speeches flat and dry. That tired feeling was pervasive. The Republican leaders all seemed to be suffering from a case of remorse complicated with symptoms of extreme nausea. Arctic explorers would have found the proceedings a fine preparatory course for their expeditions in search of the North Pole. In short, the National Republican Convention has been a nearly perfect realization of Dante's Frozen Hell."

And now, my office-getting, office-seeking friends, including Grover, Teddy, Arthur P., David B. and Billy, with all the small fry, I bid you an affectionate farewell. Hoping to meet you in a better world,

Where Presidents and Congressmen  
Can rest from all their toils,  
And Mugwumps are prohibited  
From getting at the spoils.

Yours,

SAM SLICK, JR.

THE END.







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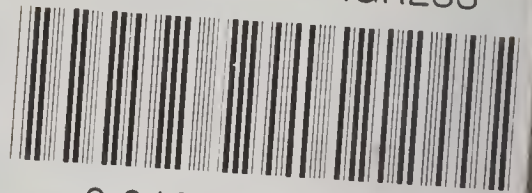
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